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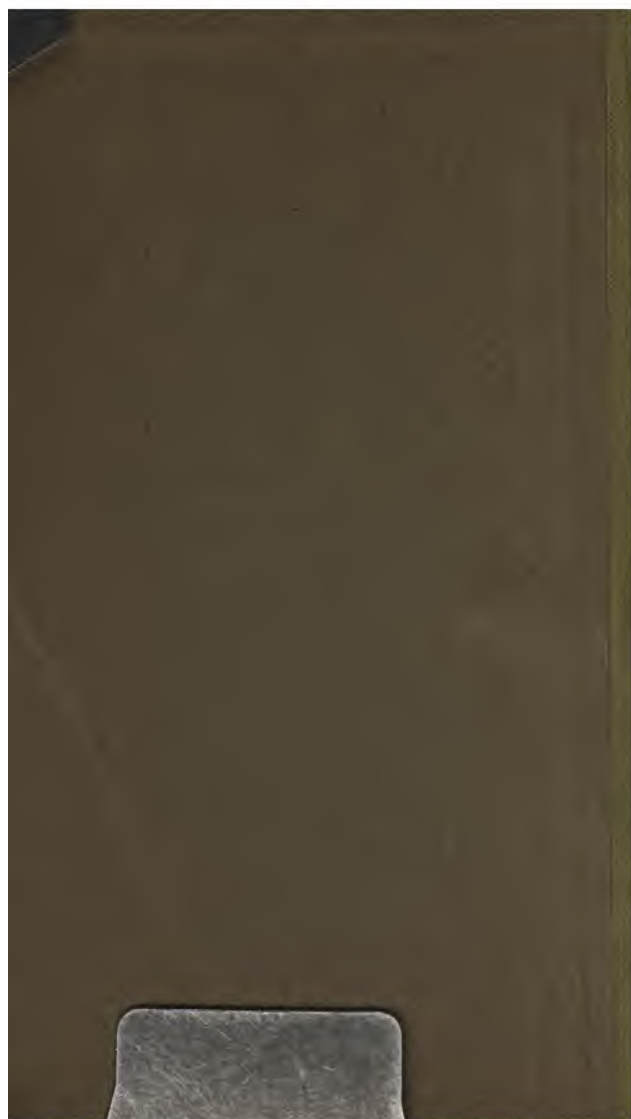
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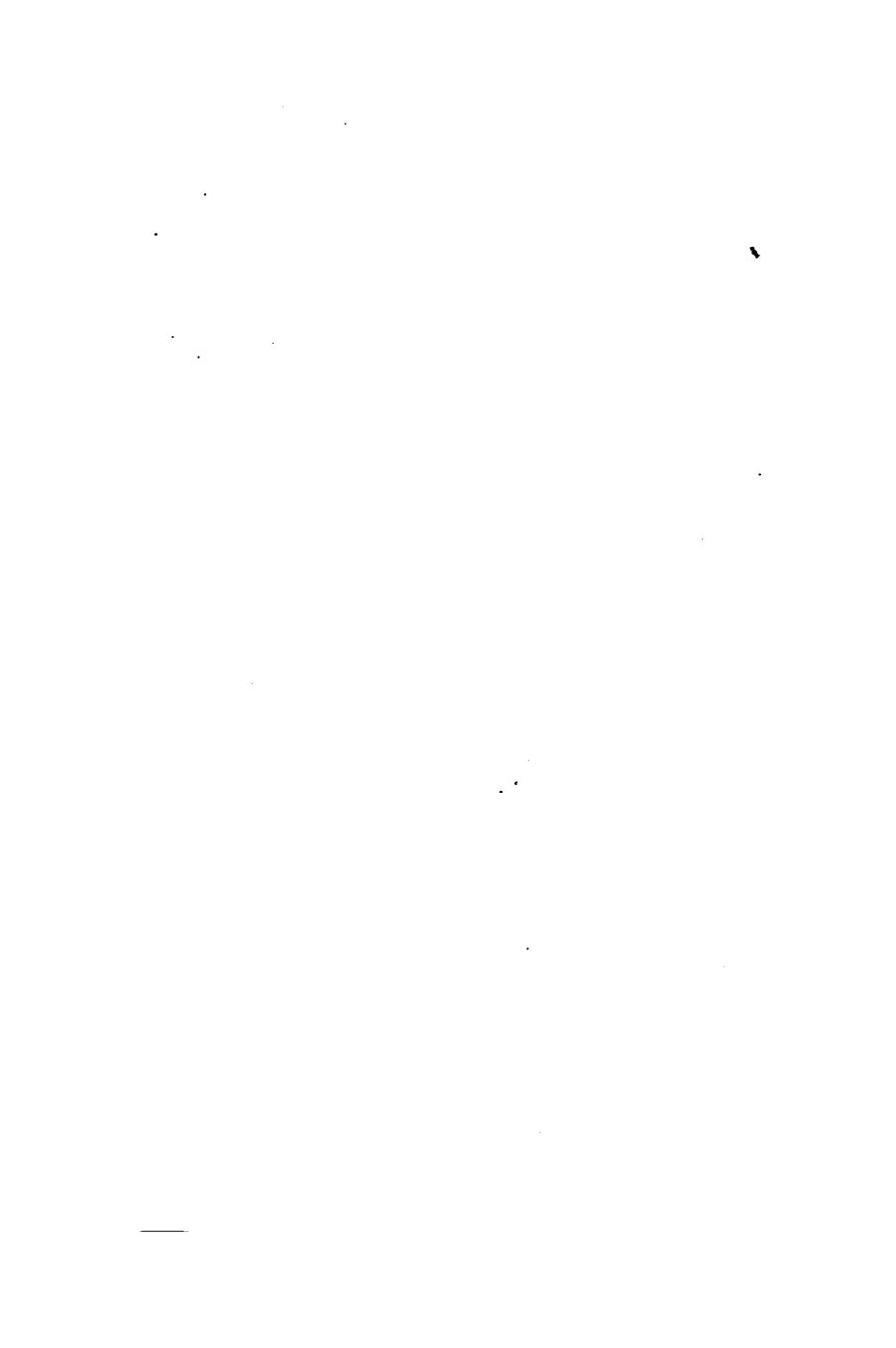


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Augustine made a movement of terror.

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THE BEARS OF AUGUSTUSBURG,

AN

EPISODE IN SAXON HISTORY,

BY

GUSTAVE NIERITZ.

WITH OTHER TALES.

TRANSLATED BY



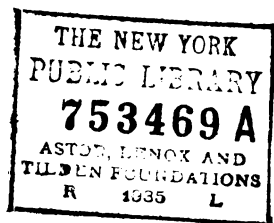
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DEDICATION.

DEAR LOTTIE :—

When I show you this pretty book, with its pictures, and your own name in print, will you open your keen, steel-gray eyes upon me with the air of an empress, and say, Thank you, Cousin Lillie! or will you look elfish, and run away to devour it in solitude? No one can tell what fairy Lottie will do, but all know that whatever pleasant caprice may lead her for the hour, — nay, the moment, — she will not be less the lovely idol of father, mother, brothers, and sisters, who will all prize the book for the dear name placed as a talisman on its opening page.

Titania herself has taught you all her charming ways; and may kind elves keep you ever happy, bright, and innocent, as now.

THE TRANSLATOR.

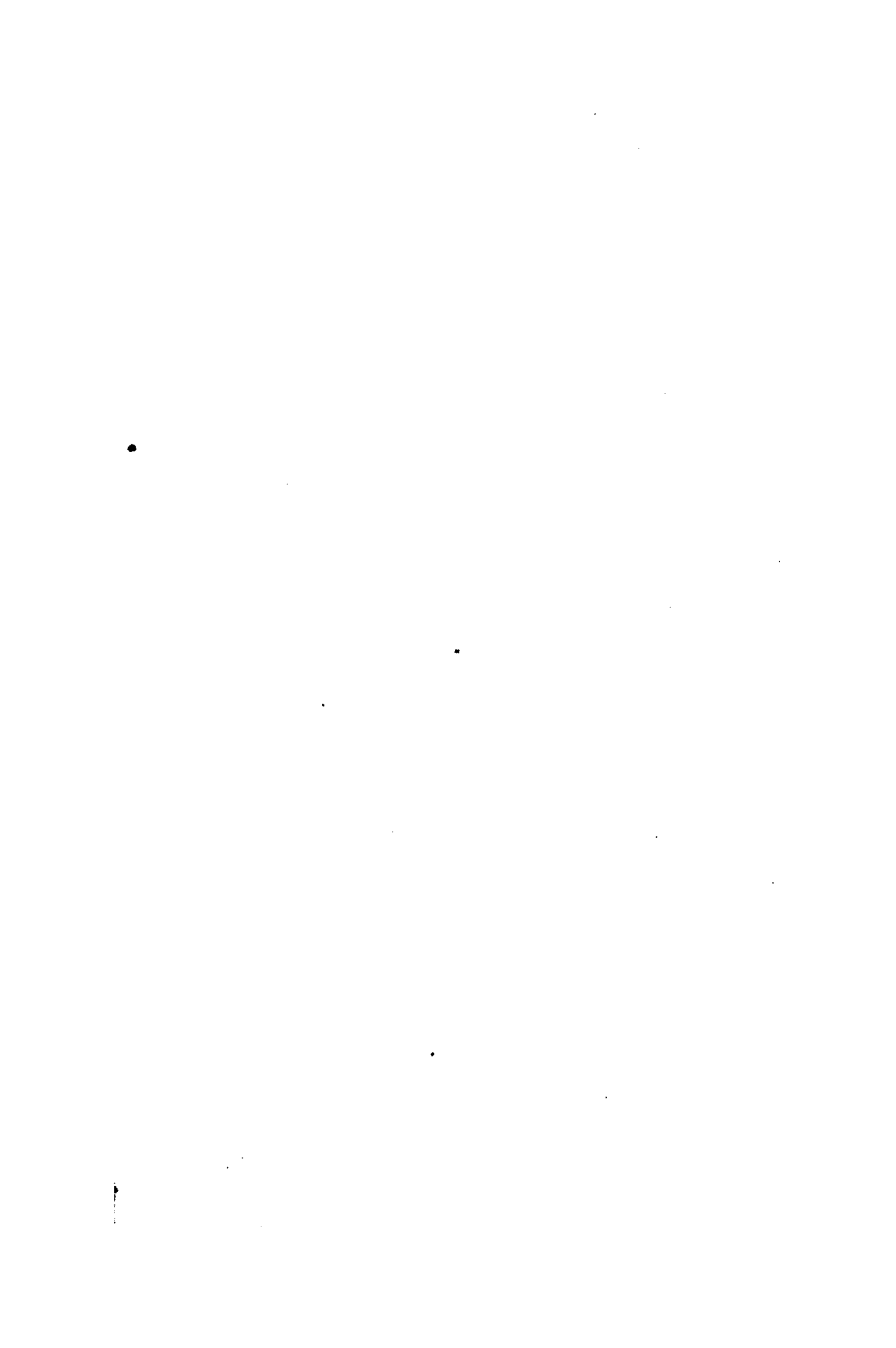
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THE
BEARS OF AUGUSTUSBURG.

▲

TALE FROM SAXON HISTORY DURING THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.



CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE BILBERRY GATHERERS.

THE road from Dresden to the little town of Chemnitz, a distance of about eight leagues, crosses the valley of Plauen, passes through Tharandt, the celebrated city of Freyburg, and Oederan. It finally descends into a lovely vale where two rivers, the Plouha and the Zschoppau, unite their pure, clear waters in a sinuous stream, which, after laving the foot of a steep mountain, reposes at length in a charming lake, whose environs delight all the lovers of nature.*

The busy hum of many factories, and of thousands of workmen, is mingled with the rural songs of the farmers and field laborers.

* These rivers, towns, and valleys are all in Saxony.

The view from the public road is truly wonderful. The traveller sees the whole valley lying at his feet, and can survey all the dwellings ranged upon the hills, forming a vast amphitheatre.

The houses encompass, like a girdle, the south side of the mountain, whose summit is crowned by a magnificent castle, which overlooks the whole landscape, and consequently may be seen from many miles around. This edifice was constructed by command of the Grand-Elector and Regent, Augustus, and has thence received the name of Augustusburg.

It was customary among the ancients to offer sacrifices to the divinities on the summits of the loftier mountains; as these personages were supposed to dwell in the heavens, the people fancied they could thus approach them somewhat nearer. These places were planted with groves which were regarded as sacred. A purer air swept over them, and the heart, moved by gratitude, beat more freely, and raised itself more lovingly towards the

Creator, when a single glance could embrace so many of the wondrous glories of nature.

The first Christians thus assembled on the high mountains, whence they could watch the dawn, and behold the splendor of the coming day, while their hearts adored with renewed fervor the God who had placed them in the midst of so much beauty and grandeur.

The great lords and princes also constructed their dwellings upon the loftiest summits in the land, and from the battlements of their proud castles surveyed the plains unrolled at their feet, and said, All this is mine. But as heaven, the object of our endless desires, with its myriad delights, can only be the reward of great efforts, thus these castles, which so majestically overlook the humbler dwellings, could only be inhabited by strong men. As the generations became more and more effeminate, the princes descended from their mountains to live with the herd of mortals, by whom they were continually surrounded, ready to obey their lightest sign.

The castle of Augustusburg had been thus abandoned; its wide lawns, its immense halls, its chambers and corridors, were cold and silent. The worms had taken possession of all which they could injure, and the sharp tooth of the borer had destroyed whatever they had spared. A castellan still dwelt in the manor, but he only occupied a few apartments.

It had been long since the lords of Augustusburg, contrary to the ancient custom of their ancestors, had inhabited this favorite residence of the old Prince Augustus of Saxony. Hence the state of decay which prevailed.

But if silence had fallen upon Augustusburg, the eastern slope of the mountain had only become the more animated. Where a proud eagle dwells, all the animals which he does not use as food are sheltered from the attack and pursuit of their enemies; and thus men who have no means of defending themselves build houses under the protection of

the strong castles, and believe themselves as secure as the little chicken under its mother's wing.

Schellenberg was the name of the village situated at the foot of the mountain crowned by the towers of Augustusburg. It gave its own appellation to the lofty summit, and might have been compared to an ant-hill placed at the foot of a majestic oak where the eagle had established his eyrie.

In the year 1754, during the reign of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, Augustus III,* in the month of July, one after-

* Augustus III. (Frederic), Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, ascended the throne in 1733. The later years of his reign were very unfortunate. In 1756, Frederic, King of Prussia, despoiled him of his Saxon states, and accorded him no privilege but that of retiring into Poland. Saxony remained in the power of the conqueror until the peace of Hubertsburg, concluded February 25th, 1763. Augustus died on the 5th of October of the same year. History represents him as a kind-hearted and generous prince, but, unfortunately for the welfare of his people, too much addicted to the ruinous expenditures occasioned by an extravagant taste for luxury of all kinds.

noon — But what has the King and Elector to do with the childish history I am about to narrate? Augustus III. troubled himself but little concerning the children of his capital, and much less about the inhabitants of Schellenberg; he had plenty else to do, although his occupations were not always worthy of a king. — But we are not writing his biography.

On the afternoon, then, of a July day, three children, a boy of twelve years old, and two little girls between eight and ten, gayly descended the steps of a house in Schellenberg. They carried in their left hands earthen bowls, proportioned to the age and strength of each. Above one of the windows of the ground floor hung a cow's horn, ornamented with brazen arabesques, and a sign representing an immense comb, surmounted by an inscription conceived in these terms: "Theophilus Winzler, Comb-maker."

The children were already at a considerable distance from the house, when a workman, wearing a leather apron, and having his

sleeves rolled up, ran after them as fast as his crooked legs could carry him, crying at the top of his lungs: "Henry! Henry! stop! stop!"

The boy turned, and waited until the other had overtaken him. The workman gave something wrapped in paper to the child, who put it in his pocket, saying: "Thank you, dear Armand! I had nearly forgotten the best part."

The comb-maker's apprentice hobbled homewards, and Henry hastened to a house bearing a totally different sign; it consisted of a wooden serpent painted blue, whose tail was fixed in the wall, and whose body projected with many undulations into the street. The monster held an iron chain in his mouth, to which was suspended a garland of brilliant metallic flowers, encircling a bottle and a glass. Besides this, a long bunch of tow, whose end nearly touched the heads of the passers-by, hung down like a weathercock.

In consequence of this arrangement, the

sign was almost always in motion, and creaked horribly, thus addressing itself not only to the vision, but to the other senses, especially that of hearing. We may easily imagine a reason for choosing a serpent as an emblem in this place. Was it not the cunning serpent which seduced the first pair to eat the forbidden fruit? Artificial serpents may then very appropriately be chosen to tempt men, not to eat, but to drink, and lose their reason. Let each one avoid such serpents; they are not less to be feared than those which hide under the flowers. Beside this sign, there was another upon the same house, bearing the following inscription:—
“Collector of the sixtieths, the quarters, and the tolls for the Electorate of Saxony.”

Neither the occupation of innkeeper, nor that of tax-gatherer, although combined in one and the same person, sufficed to support the incumbent. This plurality of offices, which might truly be deemed quite incompatible, disproved the universality of the prov-

erb, "that no man can serve two masters at the same time"; for if the tax-gatherer had nothing to do on Sunday, in his quality of collector, as an inn-keeper on that day alone did all the drinkers meet under his roof. Usually after the sermon, the most rational among the auditors assembled to partake of some substantial nourishment, in addition to the spiritual which they had just received.

The comb-maker's son Henry stopped before the collector's house, and, knocking at one of the windows of the ground-floor, cried: "Grissel! Augustus! are you not coming to help us gather bilberries?"

A flaxen head appeared at the window, and the owner, a young boy, perceiving the children, cried out, gayly: "Yes! I will join you immediately."

In three minutes more the child stood in the doorway of the house. Like his comrades, he was furnished with a large earthen bowl.

"But do you think we will find any bil-

berries?" said he, approaching the others. "All Schellenberg has gone out to look for them."

"Do not distress yourself. They cannot surely pick them all!" said Henry; and the merry little party wended their way through the pretty valley surrounding Schellenberg. They entered the cool shadows of the forest, and had not long to seek before they found plenty of ripe bilberries. While Henry and his sisters worked actively but silently, Augustus ran hither and thither, like a butterfly, flying from flower to flower, and fixing itself nowhere. His bowl was not very rapidly filled. Each child displayed its distinctive character in its mode of gathering the fruit.

All at once a triumphant shout was heard, and all eyes were turned upon Augustus, who cried: "Haha! Here are the bilberries! Thirty berries at least on every stem! I never saw such bunches before!"

The exclamations of Augustus attracted not only the comb-maker's children, but other

little berry gatherers who were near at hand. They ran towards him, and were not content merely to admire the quantity of the fruit; soon all the tempting clusters had disappeared within the bowls. Augustus lamented, but in vain, his folly in uttering exclamations which had deprived him of so rich a harvest.

"Stop! stop!" he cried. "These berries are not yours, they are mine; I found them first."

But all his remonstrances were useless. He was even forced to bear the ridicule and sarcasms of the little berry gatherers. His ill-humor increased when he saw that Henry had filled his bowl, thanks to the large comb which Armand the apprentice had brought him, and which he employed in detaching the berries.

"One may see," said he, with an envious air, "that his father is our burgomaster. His children have the advantage over us even in picking berries; and it is not wonderful that his bowl should be so soon filled."

"Well, then, do as I do!" replied Henry.

"My father is not a comb-maker, like yours," was the response.

The song of the cuckoo here interrupted the discussion, and dissipated the ill-humor of Augustus. He opened his mouth, which was quite blue with the berries he had eaten, and cried out: "My dear cuckoo, I will give you a penny if you will tell me how long I have to live!"

"Do not talk so!" said Henry, beseechingly and kindly. "The cuckoo might only utter some doleful cries, and if anything dreadful were to happen, people would think the bird had foretold it."

"Well, then, I will ask him why you stole my berries."

"I will give you some of mine," said Henry.

"No, indeed you shall not!" replied Augustus, obstinately. "You would go and boast of your generosity! I tell you it is of no use. — Cuckoo, I will give you a penny —"

"Ah see!" cried Henry, gayly, "he has flown away. He cares more to please me than you."

"No, no! he did it for me," replied Augustus; "but did you hear the fine echo which answered me just now when I cried out?"

"O yes! I heard it long ago," said Henry.

"Then let us see what the echo has to say for itself."

All the little berry gatherers began to ask questions, each in his own manner, accompanied by loud and joyous hurrahs, which were frequently repeated, to the great satisfaction of the merry band.

They were about proposing some new questions to the echo, when a fearful growl resounded through the valley. The sound was again and again repeated by the answering rocks, and the children, dumb with terror, looked at each other, trembled, while some grew pale as death.

"The bear!" said Henry, after a moment's pause. "Perhaps he has escaped from his den, and may fall upon us."

At these words, Henry's two sisters shuddered, and took refuge behind him. As for Augustus, he glanced round him, and, endeavoring to feel less afraid, said: "If the bear should come, I would soon climb one of these trees, and laugh at Mr. Bruin."

"Do you not know," replied Henry, "that he is a better climber than you, and in such a race would reach the topmost limbs sooner than you could?"

"I would lie on the ground, and pretend to be dead."

"And I would run away as fast as I could," said a third child.

"He would soon catch you," cried a fourth; "these beasts are very active."

Augustus began to count the children present. "We are twelve," said he; "if we were all to fall upon the bear, we could give him such a warm reception, that he would soon be forced to let us alone."

"Oh!" cried Henry, laughing, "have you not read in the Old Testament how two bears

destroyed the forty-two children who cried out 'Baldhead' to the prophet Elisha?"

A second growl, louder than the first, put an end to the children's conversation, and all their fine courage vanished.

"I am going," said Augustus. "I am not afraid of the bear, but I have eaten enough berries, and what do I care about not taking many home; a pint only costs two pennies, and we buy them every day; my father uses them to color the red wine."

This simple confession passed unnoticed by the children, for bilberries are very innocent, and agreeable to the taste. Augustus prepared to depart, and Henry said to him: "We will follow you, Augustus: our bowls are quite full, and if you will only wait a few moments, I will fill yours too."

"No! no!" replied Augustus. "Let us go now."

Henry went in search of his bowl, which he had left at some distance; he soon found it, but the comb, which he had laid upon it,

had vanished. He looked everywhere, but could not find it.

"Who has taken my comb?" he cried angrily.

"Not I," — "Nor I," — cried each of the children. Two little girls of four and seven years old alone kept silence. They hastened away, and were soon at a considerable distance in advance of the rest.

"Who are those children running off down there?" asked Henry.

"They are the rag-seller's children, Sybil and Augustine," replied Jenny, Henry's eldest sister.

"Was not Sybil a little light-fingered when she went to school?" continued Henry.

"Yes, she stole a pencil from me."

"And a pen from me."

"And a ruler from me," cried several voices.

"Did you see Sybil near my bowl?" asked Henry of his sisters.

"Yes, yes!" they replied. "She pretended

to be gathering berries near the place where the bowl was.

"Then she certainly has taken my comb. Jenny, watch my bowl while I run after the thief."

Henry was followed by several of the boys. The little girls too went homeward, but somewhat more slowly, and all had quite forgotten the bear.

"Ah, you thief!" cried Henry, as he joined the two little girls; "you must give me back my comb, or something dreadful will happen to you. Come, give it to me at once!" and he shook Sybil by the arm.

"But I have not got it," replied Sybil, whining.

"Whoever steals will lie too, and will surely be hung in the end," returned Henry; "and every thief will be burned in endless flames, and in boiling waves of pitch and sulphur. You will surely go to the bad place if you continue to steal so."

"I have stolen nothing," replied Sybil.

"O, I have many witnesses here that you are a thief. Will you give me the comb willingly? If not, my father will shut you up in a dungeon where you will be eaten up by snakes, and toads, and rats."

"We will throw her to the bear," said Augustus, "and if she does not confess — I am sure he has a good appetite to-day. Did you hear him growl just now? We will beat you until we find the comb."

Sybil wept, as did also her little companion; but she continued to maintain her innocence. Then Jenny had a bright thought. She bent down to the little Augustine, took her hand, and said gently: "Tell me, Tiny, where Sybil has put the comb?"

"In her hair," replied the child innocently.

Sybil's tears ceased suddenly; she threw a reproachful glance at the little one who had betrayed her, but at the same moment the comb was found in the long hair of the little thief, and restored to its legitimate owner. A torrent of reproaches overwhelmed the un-

fortunate Sybil, who was seized rather rudely by several of the children.

"What will your mother say, you shameful little thief?" cried Augustus.

"And your father, when he comes home?" added Henry.

They continued in the same manner until they left the forest and reached the little town. The first house they came to belonged to the adoptive parents of Sybil. She was only the rag-seller's niece, who had taken her when an infant, because he would not abandon a helpless orphan, his brother's child.

Sybil had until then remained quite mute under the shower of threats and menaces poured upon her. But as she approached the house her steps slackened, and the children were even obliged to use force to drag her forward, until at last she made a stout resistance, and was prodigal of fair promises to induce them to abandon their project.

She gave them her word that she would never again steal from any one, that she

would correct her faults, and be grateful during her whole life, if the children would say nothing to her parents, and would pardon her this time.

Henry began to pity her. He was not insensible to her tears and promises. His sisters also were inclined to favor her, but Augustus was inexorable. He observed that Sybil had just told a lie when she denied having taken the comb.

"And she is lying now," he added angrily. "Do not believe that she will ever be any better. She is an incorrigible thief, who already knows every trick. How well she managed to hide the comb. If we do not tell her parents what she has just done, we shall be responsible for her future fate. She will end by stealing from her own parents, and will certainly be hung."

These arguments seemed unanswerable, and even those who were inclined to show mercy had nothing more to say, and the first intention was put into execution.

CHAPTER II.

CONSCIENCE.

THE children made a great noise as they entered the rag-seller's narrow dwelling. The little Augustine, who had until then clung to Sybil's dress, left her and flew to her mother, who was seated upon the floor, occupied in sorting rags. Augustine threw herself at her mother's knees, and hid her face and her tears in her dress. Mrs. Fingerling looked first at her daughter, and then at the children, who held Sybil a prisoner.

"What is the matter, my children?"

"Sybil is a thief!" was the unanimous reply.

The good woman made a gesture of horror, and grew pale.

"Sybil has stolen the new comb from me

which I used in gathering bilberries. She hid it in her hair, where we should certainly never have found it, if Augustine had not told us about it," said Henry.

"Besides, she stole several things from us at school!" continued the other children.

Mrs. Fingerling clasped her hands in consternation, and cried: "Unfortunate girl! is this our reward? What will your father say when he hears your shame?"

Sybil, who had remained near the door, with her head bowed, and weeping in silence, clasped her hands, and fell at her mother's feet. "Ah! my dear, my good mother, beat me, starve me, shut me up in the wood-hole, or in the cellar, but I beseech you say nothing to papa. I promise you never again to steal in all my life."

"She lies like a newspaper!" cried the children; "all thieves say the same. Do not believe her, Mrs. Fingerling."

"Why did you steal the comb?" asked the woman. "You had no need of it!"

Sybil looked at her fingers, and then said: "Because Henry, the burgomaster's son, gathered with his comb more bilberries than any one else, and as we are poor — Henry could easily have another made."

"Do you then think, unfortunate child, that your father or myself could eat berries with any pleasure that had been gathered with a stolen comb? Let us rather be poor and honest, than rich and dishonest. How you will be shamed before the whole town!"

"Exactly what I told her," added Henry with assurance. "Everybody will point at you, and no one will sit beside you at school."

"And the people will call out in the street, There goes Sybil, the thief!" continued Augustus. "You will surely be hung if you do not mend your ways. Hem! — it must be frightful to have a hempen cravat round one's neck, to lose one's breath, and die in the most horrible agony!"

"All robbers begin by stealing little things,

and end by committing great robberies, and even murder!" observed a third child.

"And what a shame for us!" said Mrs. Fingerling; "for us, who have always done our best to teach her sound principles of truth and honesty!"

"And what will become of your little Augustine, if she always has a thief like Sybil for a companion?"

"Great Heaven! you are right, my child!" cried the mother sorrowfully. "Ah, my dear little one," she continued, tenderly embracing Augustine, "if you should ever become a thief, I should certainly die. You must leave this house, Sybil, or you will pervert our child too. What will your father say?"

The children bowed and courtesied; then left Mrs. Fingerling alone with the two little girls.

"What shall I do with you, unfortunate child?" again cried the poor woman, almost in despair. "Ought I to beat you? Alas! this dreadful vice cannot be thus cor-

rected, else the convicts who are so severely treated would be the most honest men in the world. But your father shall say what must be done with you. O my dear Augustine, never steal like that wicked Sybil. You see the sorrow which she causes me. Never take what does not belong to you, even if it be only a pin, or a bit of thread!"

"Augustine does not steal," replied the child; "it is Sybil who steals."

Sybil, whose heart had been sorely wrung by all she had just heard, took a desperate resolution, and, as soon as Mrs. Fingerling's back was turned, ran out of the house.

Evening finally came.

The cows, goats, and pigs, which had passed the day amid the rich pastures, returned to their shelters. The merry cow-bells tinkled at intervals, the young goats leaped about gayly, and the awkward, ugly pigs expressed their content by the most ungraceful and unmusical grunts. On one side, the shepherd, with his staff in his hand, returned at

the head of his flock. His faithful dog ran by his side, and maintained order in the homeward march. Further on, the reapers wended their way, chatting and singing, followed by the ploughmen, who led the oxen which had that day aided in making many a deep furrow across the fruitful fields.

The evening bell announced the hour for repose. The crows circled above the steeple, and prepared to retire for the night within their accustomed resting-places. The other birds, great and small, took refuge in their nests, to relate to their little families the news of the day, and lull them to sleep with their gentle cooings. The ducks and geese left the pool where they had been sporting, shook the pearls from their plumage, and went towards their peaceful homes, gabbling and quacking.

The bees flew towards their hives; the butterflies, and a thousand varieties of insects, satiated with the sweet juice of the plants, took refuge in the flower-bells closing

for the night, and prepared to enjoy a sweet sleep, while the cricket sang a lullaby. The golden sun, too, was preparing to repose in his purple bed ; some rays still illumined the face of nature, and the king of heaven disappeared from the tired eyes of mortals. But the lofty castle of Augustusburg, with its white walls and its slender towers, still shone brightly in the departing light, which long lingered lovingly around it, when the whole valley was darkened by the shadows of the coming night, as if it were a glorious beacon, illumining the homeward paths of the dwellers in the Erzgebirge.

The hour of repose had also come for Schellenberg. The master, the workmen, the apprentices, the mistress of the house, as well as the servants, laid aside their work, and gathered round the table to partake of their evening repast, after having first thanked the good Giver of all things for his new benefits. Gay conversation and joyous pleasantries seasoned the frugal meal, which was followed

by a deep and quiet sleep, the result of a good conscience.

And Sybil?

Alas! She had pronounced her own sentence. A fugitive, and a wanderer, like Cain after his fratricide, she crossed the fields, carefully avoiding all the passers-by, and hiding as soon as she fancied any one was approaching. The bell for rest had not rung for her; for her no table had been set; no smiling lips had spoken kind words to her; no soft bed and healthful slumber awaited her. The glory of the heavens, far from possessing any charm for her, only terrified her; she desired to hide in the thickest darkness. Burdened by the weight of her fault, and an object of horror to herself, she continued to fly without knowing whither to direct her steps.

The full moon in all its splendor rose behind the mountains; lamps and candles gradually illumined the windows of Schellenberg; the castle of Augustusburg alone remained plunged in darkness, like a sleeping giant;

and Sybil then determined to seek a refuge in its shadows, near the wall surrounding the garden which contained the bears.

She soon found a hiding-place, and took possession, although it did not offer so soft a couch as her little bed in the house of her adoptive parents. Sybil crouched down with her back against the wall, closed her eyes, and endeavored to sleep. But her soul was too restless to admit of quiet slumber; she was, however, beginning to dose, when she was stricken by a sudden terror, and fled precipitately, like the startled deer aroused by the hunter. She had heard behind her, on the other side of the wall, a scratching, accompanied by the deep growls of a famished beast. Sybil had not troubled herself to think whether the bear could have known that a human being was so near to him; she approached the castle court; the gate was still open, for the castellan had not yet returned from a visit he had been making to Oederan. Sybil at first took refuge in a little house, covering a well several hundred feet deep.

But when the moon enlightened the interior, and shone upon the immense wheel, which four oxen could scarcely turn, and the deep and dark abyss yawning at her feet, a sensation of renewed terror and uneasiness seized upon the little criminal. Before, it was the growling of a ferocious animal, and now a profound silence, which apparently threatened her with destruction. The wide mouth of the well seemed to her the entrance to hell, or to the grave ; and, in fact, streams of air, cold and damp, as if they proceeded from an open sepulchre, blew in Sybil's face. The great wheel, with its numberless spokes, filled her with a nameless terror, and yet she feared to take a single step in search of another hiding-place.

The stillness which reigned around Sybil was interrupted from time to time by the fall of little scales of plastering, which were detached by the dampness from the wall, and struck the water at the bottom, emitting a hollow and doleful sound. Sybil's alarm and

anxiety augmented momentarily; her teeth chattered, and her whole frame trembled. She finally decided to quit a place which seemed to her so horrible.

The four wings of the castle of Augustusburg, with their respective courts, were then called the linden tower, the summer-house, the kitchens and laundry, and the rabbit-house. They were each four stories high, the first two floors being lofty and vaulted.

It so chanced that Sybil found the door of the rabbit-house open; a sad coincidence with her condition, for she was then more easily frightened than any hare; her conscience left her less repose than eager hunters and furious dogs. She was afraid of the sound of her own footsteps as she crossed the long suites of apartments, none of which seemed to offer a secure hiding-place. The full moon sent long streams of dim light through the narrow windows, and all the rest was dark as midnight. As she passed through a large hall, her eyes fell upon some gilded frames, en-

closing portraits of various persons. They seemed to be throwing menacing glances upon the little thief, and she fled precipitately before their angry frowns.

In another room, Sybil fancied the noise made by the worms gnawing the wood-work was the ticking of the death-watch; and wherever she fled, there was always something which hindered her from finding the repose of which she stood so much in need. After the lapse of a considerable time, Sybil heard persons moving in the castle court; the castellan had just returned.

The opposite wing of the manor was soon lighted up. Sybil perceived a tall figure dressed in white, with a light in its hand, which seemed to be coming towards her. A new cause for fear! and this time, the little trembling and terrified child crouched down in a dark corner, where she resolved to pass the night, let what would happen.

The castle clock soon struck midnight; the watchman's horn was heard immediately af-

ter; and then silence again reigned throughout the whole building.

Sybil, tormented by her conscience, was in a most unhappy condition. However, a heavy sleep finally closed her lids, but her dreams were frightful. She fancied herself again in the forest gathering bilberries; she was using the stolen comb, when a bear suddenly came out from among the bushes, and threw himself upon her, with his great mouth open, and growling terribly. Sybil tried to fly, and in her fear left behind her the comb, and her bowl full of bilberries. Again, she dreamed she was with her parents playing with Augustine, while her mother was busy sorting rags. Her father appeared at the door; Augustine ran to meet him with cries of joy, while she, Sybil, remained seated and trembling; the mother then narrated the crime which Sybil had committed, and a terrible glance from her father made her shudder with a new terror. A large fire soon flamed upon the hearthstone, and the father heated a long iron rod;

when the end was red hot, the rag-seller approached Sybil, and said, in a voice of thunder: "Since you have been guilty of theft, I am going to burn out your eyes; you shall sit in darkness all the rest of your days, and will never see to steal again. Open them wide then, open them for the last time!" The iron bar came nearer and nearer; Sybil felt the most intense heat, — she shrank back in dismay; this movement made her open her eyes. She slept no longer, but might have fancied herself still dreaming, for a sudden light fell upon her face, which dazzled her, and again she closed her lids; still impressed by the images of her dream, she thought she had seen the red-hot iron bar. Incapable of speaking or moving, she anxiously awaited the result. Crouched down in one corner of the room, and not daring to look round her, she distinguished gradually the murmuring of two voices, one of which was not unknown to her; it was the hoarse voice of the man who kept the bears.

"Give me the bag, Matthew," said the voice.

"Here it is!"

"And now, remain here while I fill it with oats. What trouble it gives one to gain a miserable livelihood! When I compare our business with that of the castellan! Zounds! He understands it better than we do!—and he has not half the trouble; he quietly robs the Elector by the bag-full; he is not forced to wander about at midnight, and even if he were caught with his hand in the bag, he would not be hung; but we would find no mercy if our nocturnal rambles should ever be discovered. Tie the bag tight, Matthew; I will put it on your back."

All the good and salutary effects which the anguish of a tortured conscience, the darkness of the night, the growling of the bear, the depth and obscurity of the well, the silence of the castle, and the fearful images of her dreams, had produced upon the soul of Sybil, were in an instant destroyed by the words of the thief who was stealing the oats.

As "a thirsty plant absorbs the morning dew, so did Sybil listen with avidity to the words uttered by the keeper of the bears. She was not then the only thief in the world! Having regained a little courage, she opened her eyes, which could then bear the light emitted by the dark lantern. She perceived two men, who had just finished filling a bag with the oats which lay in a great heap in the middle of the floor. One was preparing to lift the bag upon the other's shoulders.

"Did you hear nothing?" asked the keeper, hurriedly. "I thought I heard something move. If there should be any one here, so much the worse for him, for I would give him a blow on his head which would deprive him of all desire of ever rising again!"

Sybil had made the movement which the keeper had heard. Terrified by this menace, she endeavored to hide as softly as possible behind an immense closet, which was nearly as high as the room, and which stood at a little distance from the wall.

Worms once menaced the very existence of Holland, by gnawing and destroying the wooden dikes which protected it from the fury of the sea; for you all know that the soil of Holland has been conquered from the ocean, and is only maintained by watching the dikes with the greatest possible care. What had happened in Holland had been tried with the same success in Augustusburg. These insects had so eaten away the feet of the closet behind which Sybil had sought a refuge, that they yielded to the little push she had given, and a scene of confusion ensued which no one could describe.

The above-mentioned closet bore a very close resemblance to the figure which once appeared in a dream to King Nabuchodonosor, the explanation of which he asked in vain of all his magicians, and which he finally obtained from the prophet Daniel.

We will endeavor to describe this piece of furniture, and its fall, as well as we can. On the top of the closet stood several enor-

mous plaster figures, among others one which might be considered the head of the vision; the closet itself formed the body, legs, and arms, and rested, as the figure of the statue, upon feet so fragile, that they yielded to the touch of a feeble child.

First, the plaster busts broke into a thousand fragments; the pieces flew in every direction, and came near killing the two robbers, who were already half dead with fear; then followed the whole closet with all its contents, which broke upon the ground making a terrible clatter, and, fortunately for Sybil, drowning her cries of fear and dismay.

"The ghost!" cried Matthew, who let the bag fall, and whose courage suddenly vanished.

"A spectre!" added the keeper, with his hoarse voice.

Both fled precipitately.

These men were very inconsistent! They were afraid of a ghost, of a creation of their own imaginations! but they felt no fear of

the most powerful and the most holy Being; they had no fear of God, whose existence is manifest in all his works.

The loud noise made by the falling closet must have been heard by the other inhabitants of the castle; but they doubtless shared in the superstition of the two robbers, and did not dare immediately to seek the cause. Sybil consequently remained until the early dawn hidden in the chamber which, according to the belief of the people, was haunted by a phantom; but she was then obliged to quit it. Leaving the castle, she again took refuge in the forest, where, lying down under a bush, she endeavored by sleeping to make up for lost time.

CHAPTER III.

THE RAG-SELLER.

FINGERLING, the rag-seller, had just arrived at Oederan with his little cart, to which was harnessed his dog Phylax, black as a crow. The road led always downward; but he was so heated that his face was red as a lobster, and the perspiration rolled down in streams. He had taken off his coat, which lay upon the cart, and had untied his cravat, so that one might see the beating of the arteries in his throat.

Phylax too was very warm; his tongue hung panting from his great jaws, and seemed to be endeavoring to cool itself in the sultry air. Fingerling stopped with his cart upon the market-place; his dog immediately lay at

his feet, and looked upon his master with weary and humid eyes. The rag-seller wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a large cotton handkerchief, and rested himself upon his cart, where several sacks containing rags afforded him a commodious seat.

“ You too are very warm, my good Phylax,” said he to the dog, which wagged his tail as if in assent ; “ do you want a drink ? I think so. I am in the same case, and although I never heard of a dog’s taking cold, or having a hemorrhage from drinking water while he was warm, you must nevertheless wait an instant. Courage, then ! That fountain below there, with its fresh, clear water, tempts me a thousand times more than did the forbidden fruit our first parents. Ah ! unfortunate forbidden fruit ! It must be confessed that you have cost us very dear since the beginning of the world ! But I think I have yet some little thing left to eat.”

He drew from his pocket a piece of brown bread, which he began to eat, occasionally

throwing a piece at the dog. "You do not wish to eat, you would rather drink," he continued, addressing himself to the dog, which refused to touch the bread. "That is because you do not know what is good for you. You are like the little children, who always prefer that which will do them the most harm."

Fingerling interrupted his monologue to finish his meal; when he had become somewhat cooler, he unharnessed the dog, and went to drink at the fountain which Phylax had reached before him, and was already slaking his thirst with long draughts of the delicious water. Fingerling then took from his pocket a little flute with three holes, which could consequently produce only three sounds, and commenced to play an air in his own peculiar fashion. In accordance with the proverb, which says that he who does not know the end of his song always begins anew at the commencement, the rag-seller repeated, at short intervals, his piercing

and unmelodious air, and then this modern Pan or Apollo seated himself upon his cart, and quietly awaited an opening for his trade.

After a short time, two little girls, carrying between them a bundle of rags, ran up to him, and timidly explained their intention of making an exchange with the travelling merchant. Fingerling's face became quite serious as he weighed the little bundle in his hands. He then opened it to examine its contents, piece by piece.

"What will you have for your rags?" he asked of the children.

"Whatever you will give us," replied the children.

Fingerling knelt down near his cart. Near the bags was a box which he opened; he drew out some tape, of which he gave them several yards, to this he added two packages of white thread, and finally he placed on the third finger of each child's right hand a pewter ring, which shone like silver, notwithstanding the simple metal of which it was composed,

and in which was set a magnificent brilliant of red glass. The expression in the countenances of the two little girls suddenly changed, and expressed an uncontrollable delight; they remained quite silent, but they looked at each other with pleasure beaming from their eyes, and thrust forward their little heads to admire the contents of the box, which certainly were calculated to excite their admiration. They did not pay much attention to the pieces of ribbon, the lacings, the reels, and other objects useful to the female sex; but they devoured with their eyes those things which seemed most precious to them, such as the pewter rings and ear-rings, with their little red, blue, green, or yellow crystals. Fingerling seemed to find great pleasure in contemplating the two children; he finally drew a leathern purse from his bosom. It was attached to a string around his neck, and did not seem to be very heavy or well filled. Some time elapsed before Fingerling could withdraw his fingers from it, and his

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This is all I can give you my children.

treasure must indeed have been small, since after several efforts he only succeeded in finding a few pennies ; finally, however, he drew forth two small coins, bearing the effigy of the Saxon Elector, and, placing them in the hand of the eldest girl, said : " This is all I can give you, my children ; indeed, I cannot in conscience spare you any more."

The two little girls went away very well satisfied, and Fingerling again began his music, looking towards all sides to see if no signs would be made to him from the neighboring houses, which in fact happened several times. He then drew his ambulatory shop to the place whence the call proceeded, and left it to the care of Phylax while he entered the houses to drive his little bargains.

Fingerling did as the pedestrians, who in our day travel in Italy : in the street, and in public places, he only displayed his empty purse, while in the dwellings, and before the honest citizens, he drew another from his pantaloons pocket, and this latter contained several

pieces of great calibre, according to the expression then in use. The expression "great calibre" is certainly well found; for as a large ball more surely attains its aim than small shot, so do florins and half-florins accomplish the end proposed a thousand times better than a light battery of farthings and pennies.

Fingerling was satisfied with small gains, and his ambition did not reach beyond the most modest expectations; he was then quite contented with the purchases he had made in Oederan. He was troubled with no petty pride, or he would not have permitted all, both great and small, to call him rag-man, but would have insisted upon such titles as that of "Purchaser of old linen," or, perhaps, "Furnisher of crude materials for the manufacture of paper."

When he had finished his business at Oederan, he went into an inn, where he called for sixpence worth of soup, and some bones for his dog. Both finished their dinner before the house on a stone bench, which served as a seat to Fingerling.

Fingerling's was no unimportant business, especially in the eyes of the children dwelling in the suburbs, and in the small towns; our travelling merchant was soon surrounded by several barefooted spectators, all eager to survey the contents of that box which was reported to contain so many marvellous things. Among the children was a little girl about the age of Fingerling's Augustine; her eyes were very sore, and very much inflamed. The rag-seller, touched by compassion for her, said: "Little one, shall I pierce your ears, and put a pair of ear-rings in them? That will cure your eyes, and I will ask you nothing, but will make you a present of the rings."

After this proposition of the honest rag-seller, all the other children would willingly have had sore eyes; but notwithstanding a slight feeling of envy, they persuaded the child to submit to the operation; and to decide her, Fingerling drew a pair of shining ear-rings with green stones from his box, which glittering bribe overcame the little girl's reluc-

tance. Fingerling put a piece of soap behind the lobe of her ear, and taking a large, sharp needle, he pierced the necessary holes quickly and skilfully, thus showing that he was by no means unaccustomed to this kind of operations. The child did not utter a single cry, and Fingerling complimented her upon her courage. You should have seen the pride and happiness which shone in the child's eyes, when the jewels sparkled in her ears.

The rag-seller finally continued his way towards Schellenberg, where he dwelt. Both he and Phylax felt refreshed; they rapidly ascended the long hill, without resting once; Phylax even uselessly wasted the strength of his lungs by barking joyfully; Fingerling shared in the gayety of his dog.

"You see, Phylax," said he, "we shall soon be at home; I am sure you have travelled over this same road often enough to know that it leads home. Truly, one is better at home than anywhere else! Courage, Phylax, and go on; we will soon be at the top of the mountain."

The dog pulled, and Fingerling pushed with all his might: both master and servant were content. Some creatures require so little to make them happy, while others are never satisfied, let them have what they may. In this case, a few sacks of rags bought for a small sum, and the hope of a quiet rest in a pleasant home, were enough to fill the heart of the honest rag-seller with joy and delight.

The summit was soon reached. Fingerling stopped his cart, and seated himself on the grass beside it.

"Let us breathe a little," said he to his dog; "we have worked long enough for the present. You have only a vague instinct that we will soon be at home; it is a pity you cannot understand me when I tell you that our Augustusburg lies on the other side of this mountain. What a magnificent castle! Our country ought to be very proud of it. If I was Elector of Saxony, do you think I would leave it uninhabited as it is at present? What money must have been spent in the

construction of that building! They say that the well alone cost a ton of gold, and that every glass of water is worth a penny. The Collector read in the Chronicle, that the old Augustus himself said, that if a halbert were to be placed upright in the ground, and silver coins were to be poured over it until the very point were covered, the sum would not equal that spent in the construction of the gigantic castle. Hem! and what of that? Why, nothing,—for all that money was spent in the country, and the poor people had plenty of work; while, now, what becomes of all our good Saxon money? It goes to Poland! never to return. The Collector says that Poland swallows up every year at least two Augustusburg castles, and that we never get even a Polish ox in return; I mean the four-footed ones, for they say there are many two-footed ones who have left Poland to come to our country. But, my faith! what is that to me? I can change nothing, and I must always pay my taxes just the same. But,

Phylax, do you smell nothing? There must be a carrion in this neighborhood. Ah, yes! there is a crow. What quantities of insects already cover it, and how busy they are, eating up that dead bird! Fie! what a strange fancy! what taste! But that is all right; the Creator wills that nothing should be lost; he can so change the most disgusting objects, that we no longer recognize them, and even find them most delicious. The worms eat the dead bodies; the birds eat the worms; and we in our turn eat the birds without repugnance, and without troubling ourselves how they are fed, and how their flesh has acquired so delicate a flavor. It is just the same with my rags. If a dainty young lady, well dressed and perfumed, were forced to touch them, I believe she would use a pair of pincers. But when they are transformed into fine, glazed, satin paper, she not only suffers her white arm and her delicate hand to rest upon it, but, if she could not immediately find a paper-cutter, she might even pass it across

her rosy lips, that it might tear the more readily.

“Let no one, then, speak ill of my rags, for if they were endowed with the faculty of speech, they might tell many a strange tale, and teach us more than half the books and manuscripts manufactured from their substance. The biography of a shirt or a handkerchief might surpass in interest that of many a celebrated man. I bought to-day in Oederan a bundle of rags on which were several blood-stains, both great and small. The woman who sold them to me said they proceeded from a hemorrhage which her son had had, and of which he had died. But who knows if that is the simple truth? Who can tell if these rags have not been the mute witnesses of an assassination or a murder? God alone, our Lord and Master, knows the truth, and will reveal the most hidden secrets.”

Fingerling had still many mountains to scale, and many valleys to cross; but finally, towards evening, he arrived at the little town

of Schellenberg. He gayly saluted the nearest houses, and the dog, notwithstanding the weight behind him, ran on so fast, that he could scarcely keep pace with him. Fingerling entered the street in which he dwelt, and rejoiced in the anticipation of meeting and embracing his family. He looked about on all sides to see if he could not perceive his little Augustine, who, like the other children, was more often to be found in the street than in the house. All at once, he saw the people coming out of their houses, and all running in the direction of Augustusburg. A woman, who was hastening in the same direction, clasped her hands when she saw Fingerling, and cried out: "O neighbor! what a misfortune! How I pity you! Prepare yourself for something terrible!"

She then pursued her way, without making any reply to the rag-seller's questions; the poor man was of course quite astonished and terrified at what she had just said to him.


Fingerling's joy had vanished all at once,

like a soap-bubble ; he stopped his cart. Ought he to follow the others, or go first to his home ? He did not take long to consider, but followed his neighbors as fast as he could. His faithful dog howled and endeavored to accompany him, but was prevented by the heavy cart. He succeeded, however, by making a great effort, in pulling it forward a few steps, and even in upsetting it, but could not free himself from his harness. He filled the air with his melancholy howls, but no one came to the assistance of the poor beast.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEARS' DEN.

It was Saturday evening; the day consecrated to repose was at hand, and the week with all its labors and troubles was passed. Who would not have been content with such a prospect before him? The women had still some washing and cleaning to do, so that they were not sorry when their husbands went out. Besides, this summer evening was so beautiful, that it seemed to invite them to enjoy it; consequently, masters, workmen, apprentices, young men, young girls, boys, children with their nurses, in short, nearly every one, assembled near the bears' den at the castle, and all seemed to be highly amused with the motions of these comical animals. Those among the dwellers in Schellenberg



who could afford to buy a glass of beer, and spend a few pennies for their amusement, had taken possession of the ninepin alley which ran along the outside of the wall bounding the bears' den. There, without in the least derogating from his dignity as burgomaster, the comb-maker Winzler had taken off his coat, and all the rest had followed his example; even the electoral collector of taxes and contributions was taking his ease, that he might pass the evening as pleasantly as possible. The balls rolled, the pins were knocked down; the boy proclaimed the fortunate players; these latter laughed, while the losers grumbled; and on the other side of the wall the imprisoned children of the forest, the bears, growled terribly, enraged at hearing so unusual a clamor.

The other inhabitants of Schellenberg stood near the wall, which at this point was very low, and looked down into the den at the bears, whose agility and strange grimaces were highly diverting

The father of Augustus, the collector, was a determined and enthusiastic player at nine-pins, which fact might easily be discovered from the manner in which he set about the game. While the boy was still arranging the pins, he was ready to play, and measured the distance with his eye, while he made all due allowances for the accidents of position. Then he stooped, and never threw his ball without having first well calculated the necessary force. The collector's play did not really begin until after the ball had left his hands. He followed it with his keen eyes like those of Argus, and, if it threatened to roll to one side, and miss its aim, he bent his body in the opposite direction, and gesticulated as if he could still direct it, and force it to change its course. His very feet were not inactive, as the ball rolled in the one or the other direction. When, on the contrary, it kept the middle bravely, the collector's hands and arms executed a whirlwind, as if to show the ball the rotatory motion which it should

pursue among the pins. To these peculiarities did the collector owe the attention he excited whenever his turn came to play. It was only necessary to announce this fact, and immediately all the participants hastened towards the alley to be spectators of the game.

But on that day the spectators were entirely wanting; they must then have found something more interesting in the bears' den. Mr. Gro'ssel's hands (for so was the collector named) had just executed a windmill after the most approved fashion. Napoleon himself could not have been better pleased at beholding the enemy's regiments overthrown by his artillery, than was the Collector Gro'ssel at the sight of the pins falling before his successful ball. Not a single one remained standing; all, without exception, lay prostrate on the field of battle; and the boy opened his mouth wide as he could, while he cried out: "The whole nine are down! Three cents for ——" The rest was either unspoken, or was drowned by the cries pro-

ceeding from the crowd encircling the bears' den. There was, however, a great difference between these sounds and the cries of joy uttered by the boy who set up the pins, and who, strange to say, immediately deserted his post, forgot his play, and hastened to the point whence the sounds proceeded; the players followed his example, and the collector was obliged to follow them as rear-guard. They saw the people who stood round the wall, pale, frightened, and trembling; all eyes were turned towards the deep ditch forming the den in which the bears were confined.

Exclamations were heard on all sides.

"Great God! I cannot bear to see it! O the poor mother! Can no one aid her!"

The Collector was met by his son, as pale as death, and shivering with horror. "Indeed, it was not my fault! Some one pushed me behind, and I could not help pushing too!" exclaimed the child.

"But what is the matter? What has hap-

pened?" asked the collector, using both elbows to open a passage for himself through the crowd.

Everybody answered at once by pointing towards the ditch, their countenances expressive of the deepest horror. After some trouble, the collector reached the place, and looked over the low wall. He was near that part of the garden which bore the name of the bear-trap; it was a corner separated from the rest of the den by a sliding-door, which offered all the necessary facilities for catching the bears, and shutting them up in iron cages. They were thus transported to the capital, when they were required to figure in the combats occasionally exhibited, in which they had comported themselves most honorably. This sliding-door was usually kept raised. The crowd had succeeded in enticing one of the bears into the corner whence they could more closely admire his graceful gestures. Although Master Bruin's gymnastic feats were far from equalling in

agility and variety those of a tame bear, the good people of Schellenberg, who were easily satisfied, were never weary of watching them.

But what a horrible spectacle presented itself to the collector's eyes! A child, a little girl of about four years old, was lying, or rather sitting, in the bear-trap, and surveyed with evident fear and disquietude the crowd assembled on the top of the wall, although she by no means comprehended the danger of her situation. She seemed to have broken one arm in her fall, for it hung loosely by her side. She threw a glance of silent reproach towards the little girl who should have taken better care of her, while the unfortunate little nurse cried out, clasping and wringing her hands: "Indeed! indeed! it was not my fault. Augustus pushed me, and I came near falling myself."

Following the example of our first parents, their descendants are always ready to lay the blame of their deeds upon the heads of others. Thus did Augustus Gro'ssel, as well

as Sybil; for the little one who had fallen into the den was the rag-seller's daughter, Augustine.

When Sybil, as we have already related, had slept during several hours in the forest, hunger forced her to return to her parents. Mrs Fingerling, who had passed the night in a state of great disquiet, not knowing what had become of the child, felt quite relieved at seeing her. She consequently received her with less severity than she would have done under any other circumstances, and determined to postpone the punishment of the little thief until her husband should return.

The noise which had disturbed the castle of Augustsburg during the night had been followed by no consequences. At the break of day, the bear-keeper's companion ventured into the room to carry away the bag, which might have revealed the true cause of the disturbance. The fall of the closet was attributed solely to the worm-eater condition of its feet; so that, in the end, all finished by deriding the fancied apparition.

After this little digression, let us return to the bears' den.

Augustine had not long been, so to speak, in the power of the bear, when the animal, which was lying at some distance from the spot on which the child had fallen, rose, and came towards her.

Then all the spectators, old and young, began to shout as loudly as possible, hoping to hinder the bear from falling upon the little girl; but it is well known that a bear's skin is very tough, and his ears are not a whit more tender; so that, without troubling himself in the least about these noisy demonstrations, Master Bruin gravely approached the little Augustine. The women fancied her already torn to pieces, and turned away their heads in horror. As for the men, they grew pale, and their very hairs stood on end. The bear soon reached the child, who was crying; he raised his huge paw, but immediately let it fall again without injuring her.

The spectators breathed. Bruin smelled

the little one upon all sides, and then stood motionless by her side; finally he laid himself down, and rested his head upon Augustine's shoulder. What anxiety! So ferocious an animal, beside so innocent a lamb!

Augustine made a movement of terror, and tried to escape from so dangerous a neighborhood; but the bear gave a terrible growl, and the people cried to the child to remain quite quiet. Everything continued thus during a half-hour. The ninepins were entirely abandoned, and even the collector's nine-strike had been completely forgotten.

One man left the crowd to inform the child's mother in Schellenberg, and another, to call the keeper of the bears from the castle. All the inhabitants who still remained in Schellenberg, and who could in any way leave it, followed the mother, who hastened with all possible speed to the dreadful scene.

No one can depict the poor woman's agony as she beheld her cherished little one in the power of this formidable animal. The child

still wept, and cried out: "Mother, I am so afraid!"

Noack, the keeper of the bears, also came, but not quite so swiftly. He said, grumbling: "I told you long ago that this would happen. You would push and jostle as if you were scrambling for cakes, and not meddling with savage bears. And now you call upon me to help you out of your trouble; but how? That is the point. It is true that the bears know me; but indeed if I were Bruin's own brother I could not venture to take the child away from him. What use is it for me to spend a whole year in taming them, if a single fight at Dresden undoes all my work? If we had had one recently, the child would have been devoured long ago. That devilish fellow has tremendous jaws, and teeth as long as my little finger. With one crunch, he could crush the child's head like a ripe plum."

Such speeches were certainly not calculated to encourage the by-standers, and the unfor-

fortunate mother became more and more despairing. She wrung her hands, and besought the men to make some attempt to save her child, and, finally, an experiment was agreed upon.

They first threw all kinds of eatables into the den, thereby hoping to divert the bear's attention, and induce him to forget the child. The proprietor of the nine-pin alley had applied to this purpose all his smoked meat and sausages.

Among the eatable projectiles were some truly magnificent sausages. They hoped thus to stimulate the bear's appetite. But what is dead, smoked meat, in comparison with the fresh, tender, and palpitating flesh of a young child? Had the bear suffered himself to have been seduced by such allurements, it might well have been said that he had exchanged a pigeon in the hand for a sparrow on the roof.

"You see now," cried the keeper, with a triumphant air, "you see that I give my beasts plenty of food, and keep nothing for myself. I tell you, if Bruin had been hun-

gry, he would have eaten up the child long ago, or at least he would have fallen upon the meat thrown to him."

This first means having failed, it became necessary to try another.

"Try to get out of the den," they said to Augustine, "and go into the garden; but go slowly, as if you were taking a walk."

The little girl obeyed through instinct; she rose, trembling, and slowly approached the opening which led to the larger division of the den. At this sight, all eyes were filled with tears of compassion, and then first did they perceive that Augustine had sprained her ankle; she limped as she walked. Her broken arm hung uselessly by her side. The bear followed Augustine as if he had been her shadow, and, without lifting his muzzle from her shoulder, he seemed like a wicked cat, finding pleasure in torturing a poor little mouse, or an enormous serpent, writhing around the fragile form of a young bird, or perhaps still more like an ugly black spider entangling a fly in his web.

'This experiment was no more successful than the first; the bear was by no means disposed to permit the child to move a single step from him, and a third attempt was made, much more adventurous than either of the others.

In the wall enclosing the den, near the trap, was a door, which opened towards the inside. They determined to open it; several men were to be stationed on the outside, and by showing themselves to the bear, attract his attention towards themselves. During this time, the child was to return as quickly as possible into the trap, and then the door of the den was to be lowered as quickly as possible, that she might thus be separated from the bear.

At this moment, Fingerling, Augustine's father, arrived. He was entirely out of breath. As soon as he came near the den he cried in despair, "My child! my poor child! Are you still alive? Or is all over? Let me come near that savage beast; I will

save my child, or lose my own life in the attempt!"

"Back!" cried the other men to the rag-seller, who was approaching with great impetuosity. "Your haste can only hinder us; we must act with coolness and deliberation. Back, Fingerling, if you wish your child to be saved!"

"Come here!" cried Fingerling's wife, who then stood upon the wall at a point but little raised above the ground. "Let us pray to God that he may preserve our child!"

The husband and wife embraced without speaking a single word. They then turned their eyes towards Augustine, whom they already regarded as lost.

Three men, who well understood the danger of the situation, the burgomaster, the collector, and the parish clerk, carefully opened the door, without however abandoning the button of the bolt. They had already told the child that she must hasten into the trap as soon as the bear left her. Several men

stood ready to let down the door of the trap as quickly as possible. During all this time the keeper alone remained quiet, under the pretext that the bear, knowing him, would not leave the child.

When he heard the door grate upon its hinges, the bear turned his head, and quitted his position; he uttered a deep and menacing growl, and opened his great mouth, red as blood, and furnished with long and pointed teeth. He went first slowly, and then more rapidly, towards the men who stood in the doorway. When he was about ten feet from the opening, he stopped, and prepared to fall upon them.

"My God! grant us thine aid!" cried the mother upon her knees.

"Aid us, good God!" said Sybil, sobbing; "indeed I am innocent."

"Almighty God! Thou who didst protect Daniel in the lion's den, come to my child's assistance," prayed Fingerling, in a voice heard far above the rest.

The three suppliants raised their hands towards heaven. A silence as of death reigned throughout the whole crowd. They were so intent that they scarcely dared to breathe, for the bear had just thrown himself towards the door. The die was cast, and the stake was life or death.

"Come quickly, and save yourself!" cried a hundred voices at once to the child.

The three men had closed the door in time, and the bear's paw had driven the bolt into the lock. Furious, he turned towards the child, who had risen, and was running towards the trap with all her might.

If fear, if the pain caused by her sprained ankle, if her broken arm, had suddenly deprived the child of her strength! If the sliding door, which had not been used for a long time, and which did not move easily in its grooves, should refuse to close tightly! If the bear, which sprang forward with a furious yell, should reach his prey before the door could be closed! The possibility, the proba-

bility, of one of these three cases, was fearful; each one thought of them, and all remained motionless and silent. Not a word, not a syllable, escaped their lips; their suppressed breathing alone gave evidence of their feelings.

The little Augustine, who, notwithstanding her extreme youth, was very intelligent, had just entered the trap. The sliding door descended with a great noise, and fell upon the bear's foot, which the animal withdrew with a renewed howl of pain and anger.

Augustine was saved! Saved! But her mother had entirely lost her consciousness; she had fainted. As for Fingerling, he gave all his attention to his child, who had just been restored to him. Not a second had elapsed before he was already in the den, and pressing his dear Augustine to his heart. He then took her upon his knees, calling her by the most tender names. In the excess of his joy he did not perceive that Augustine embraced him with her left arm only, and en-

deavored to preserve the other from all contact. Sybil came after her father, and tried to explain that it was not her fault that Augustine had fallen into the den. A ladder was lowered into the trap, which Augustine ascended with her father and Sybil. Meanwhile, the mother had recovered from her swoon, and now shared the joy of her husband, with whom she disputed Augustine's caresses.

While the crowd surrounded the parents and their children restored to happiness, while they joyfully felicitated them upon the happy termination of this dreadful scence, the game of nine-pins was recommenced, and the last stroke of the collector, which had won the game, received its proper valuation. As for the poor bear, he uttered the most ferocious growls, and walked up and down his prison, seeking in vain the child for whom he had conceived such an affection. It was long before he became quite calm, and then he went and lay down sadly in a corner.

CHAPTER V.

THE JUDGMENT.

FINGERLING returned with his family to his house, followed by a numerous escort. He carried Augustine in his arms, while the mother, who walked by his side, held her uninjured hand.

All Schellenberg was afoot; the village surgeon, Beyer, proffered his assistance, which was immediately accepted.

He found the left ankle sprained, and the upper bone in the arm fractured. Cold-water bandages would soon cure the foot, but the arm required longer and more serious attention.

"Neighbor Stimmel and friend Meisel," said the physician to two of the men who with many other curious individuals filled the

rag-seller's room, "help me to hold the child while I dress her arm. Neither the father nor the mother can do it; for if the pain should make the little one scream, I am sure they would loose their hold at the most important moment, and all would be ruined. But the rest of you, who can be of no use, must go out; you are in the way, and would only hinder me. Go, then, I pray you, or I shall be obliged to send for an officer to clear the room."

The crowd dispersed, and the physician began the operation. One of the two men whom he had named held the child, while the other, following the surgeon's directions, pulled the broken arm strongly and steadily towards him, until Mr. Beyer was sure that the two parts of the bone were in their proper positions, and united exactly. The arm was then carefully bandaged, and protected by wooden splints.

Augustine bore this painful operation with much courage and firmness. Not a cry es-

caped her poor lips compressed with pain, and she kept her eyes, which were filled with tears, steadily fixed upon her mother.

Sybil, with clasped hands, stood in one corner, regarding the little patient with a wild and anxious air.

"My child," said Beyer; when the operation was finished, "you have behaved bravely, and might shame many a man; you shall have some sugar-plums to-morrow. Poor child! you came very near being torn in pieces by that terrible bear with his huge jaws. Let any one deny after this that there is a special Providence for children, and guardian angels to protect them from all kinds of dangers. A quieting draught will now be of great use to you. It will refresh your blood, and diminish the fever which will soon make its appearance. A little sleep, too, will aid you wonderfully. Only you must all be careful that she does not move her arm too much while the fever is upon her. You see, Augustine, if you remain very quiet, and if you

follow my directions exactly, your arm will soon be entirely well, and stronger than it was before. But tell me, how did you come to fall into the bears' den?"

At this question, Sybil's pale face flushed crimson, which seemed a sure token of guilt to all who beheld it.

"Yes, how did it happen?" asked the parents.

"I was standing near the wall," replied Sybil, "and I was holding Augustine in my arms to show her the bear. Augustus, the collector's son, was looking over my shoulder. All at once he gave me a push from behind; I lost my balance, and if I had not clung to the wall I should have fallen into the den. But I do not know myself how Augustine fell from my arms, I was so frightened."

"My poor little Augustine," said Mrs. Fingering, "was sitting in the bears' den like a tender bird menaced by the talons of an eagle. What were you thinking of, my child?"

"I was afraid," replied the little girl, en-

deavoring to smile; "it terrified me to hear every one cry out so loud."

"Mr. Bruin must be very fond of children," said the surgeon. "I warrant you, he would not have spared me so long had I fallen under his nose. But do I not hear something growling?"

In fact, just then the prolonged howl of an animal was distinctly heard.

"It is my dog," exclaimed Fingerling, hastily. "The poor beast! I had entirely forgotten him during Augustine's danger."

"I will go with you," said the physician, seeing that the rag-seller was preparing to go out.

"Ah! there is your dog, with his cart upset," exclaimed Beyer, as soon as they reached the street. "His cries are really touching; he is probably wearied with his uncomfortable position. But I had forgotten. The collector desired me to say to you not to distress yourself concerning the expenses of your little girl's illness, for he intends to

bear them, as his son was the cause, although involuntary, of Augustine's fall."

"May God reward him!" said Fingerling gratefully, "and you, too, Doctor, for the good care you have taken of my child."

He then lifted up the sacks, and replaced them on the cart, which he drove into his little garden. Phylax was finally set at liberty, and testified his joy by a series of short, quick barks, with a running accompaniment of frolicsome leaps and gambols.

Mrs. Fingerling perhaps thought it better to swallow a bitter cup at a single draught, than to drink it drop by drop, or perhaps she shared a weakness belonging to many of her sex, who find it difficult to restrain the expression of anything weighing on their minds. In short, scarcely had tranquillity again been established in the rag-seller's house, when his wife related to him the fault committed by Sybil the evening before, during his absence, and how she had passed the night out of the house.

The rag-seller could not swallow the morsel he was conveying to his mouth. The little thief turned away her head, and grew pale beneath the severe look cast upon her by her adoptive father.

"We have then brought up a little criminal!" cried Fingerling, laying down his knife in dismay; "a thief! Good Heaven! is this our reward? Unfortunate child, do you still dare to remain in my presence?"

Sybil began to cry. "I will never do so again; it was only a comb," she said, sobbing, and hiding her face in her apron.

"Only a comb!" replied Fingerling, angrily; "only a pin! only a pencil! So do all thieves excuse themselves. But I tell you that if you only give one of your hairs to the Devil, you will be his for ever, for people always begin with little things, and end with great ones. Do you remember the terms of God's commandment? It says, Thou shalt not steal. God does not say, Thou shalt not commit great robberies, but thou may-

est take little things. The Holy Scripture says, 'Robbers shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven'; and the word of God is true; what he promises, he will perform. Do not deceive yourself; God is terrible in his chastisements. Theft too always brings lying in its train. But God also exterminates liars. It is not alone I who say this, but the Almighty God himself. He is just, and punishes those who disobey his holy commandments."

"The keeper of the bears says that the Castellan of Augustusburg steals as much as any one else, and perhaps more," replied Sybil, endeavoring to excuse herself.

"And even if the Elector himself were to steal," cried the irritated rag-seller, "if the number of thieves should be beyond all our powers of computation, that would be no excuse for robbery. Thus will the goats, whom the Lord will place upon his left hand at the day of judgment, also be innumerable, and they will be sent into eternal fire. I love

my little Augustine dearly, but if I knew that she would ever become a thief, I would prefer, may God pardon me! that she should have been devoured to-day by the bear. And she will become a thief if she remains in your society. You must then leave my house, and go to the orphan asylum."

"Ah, my dear father, no! no!" cried Sybil, embracing Fingerling's knees. "I assure you I will do so no more."

"All thieves caught in the act say the same," replied the rag-seller. "But no one can tell whether they speak the truth or not."

"Do not frighten her too much," whispered Mrs. Fingerling to her husband; "she will run away again."

"Let her do it!" replied Fingerling; "we should lose nothing. On the contrary, the loss would be hers, for she would be without a home."

"Go, take the dog something to eat," said Mrs. Fingerling to Sybil, "and give him some fresh water."

When the child had left the room, the woman said gently to her husband: "We must not be too severe with the little girl. I think her mother is in a great degree the cause of her fault. She neglected the child. Do you remember that unhappy day when your sister-in-law took a piece of ribbon from the counter at the fair, and attempted to carry it off with her. Indeed I fear that Sybil has inherited her mother's failing, and we should thence be the more indulgent."

"No! no!" replied Fingerling, hastily. "Have we not all inherited the original sin of our first parents? But a merciful God has given us strength to resist temptation. 'Resist the Devil,' says Holy Writ, 'and he will flee from thee.' If, with God's aid, we cannot succeed in correcting Sybil, and preventing a repetition of her fault, she must go. I was so happy and contented as I came near my home, I had succeeded so well! Several days had elapsed since I had seen you all, and I counted upon passing

such a happy Sunday, when all these misfortunes came at once. There is then nothing but deception in the world !”

Fingerling continued to complain until he went to bed, for his wife would not permit him to watch by Augustine’s couch, as she was sure he must be fatigued, and need repose after so long and wearisome a journey. She took this care upon herself. Fingerling slept soundly until midnight, when he rose and went to see his child. Augustine slept quietly in the soft light shed by the little chamber-lamp. The mother was seated at the head of the bed, with her eyes closed.

Fingerling thought over all the events of the preceding day. He had very nearly lost his dear little Augustine, his chief joy upon the earth ; he suddenly remembered that he had not yet thanked God for having so miraculously rescued her. The chief cause of this was the trouble occasioned by Sybil’s fault.

“But,” asked he of himself, “have I not per-

mitted my anger to carry me too far? The Holy Scripture says, that if any one commits a fault, we must endeavor by gentle words again to lead him into the right way. And have I not permitted myself to be governed by my anger?"

These reflections banished sleep from Fingerling's eyes. He first repaired his forgetfulness by thanking God, then dressed himself, took his lamp, and went into the principal room, where Sybil slept upon an old sofa. He placed the light upon the ground, and took a seat at Sybil's side. He could not look without emotion upon the little girl, whose eyes were closed, and whose hands were crossed upon her breast. She had probably wept herself to sleep, as her eyes were red and inflamed.

"I too am a sinner," said Fingerling to himself, "although I am no robber. If God were to judge me, my sins would weigh heavily in the balance. This little girl is my own niece, and my brother commended her

to my care with his dying breath. I must then have patience with her."

Sybil opened her eyes, but closed them immediately on beholding her uncle. The latter then said to her in a gentle voice, placing his right hand paternally upon that of the child:—

"You are awake, my child; I too watch, and for your sake; your fate torments me, and hinders my sleeping. Listen then, attentively. You know how I love you, and remember well what I am about to say to you.

"Every thief, of course, steals that he may be more happy, and may improve his condition; but he merely renders himself more unhappy. Thieves only bring shame to themselves; they are detested, despised, and abandoned by every one. Their name is dishonored, and no one pities them. They are taken to the house of correction, or even, perhaps, to the scaffold. You can keep the stolen object but a short time, while you will long repent the theft, on account of the mis-

eries which its consequences will cause you. Honesty is better than riches. You rest now on a soft couch, sheltered by a roof, while during the past night your conscience led you up and down, hither and thither; and who can tell what dangers may not have menaced you? Where were you? Where did you pass the night?"

Sybil would not at first give any answer to this question, but she finally yielded to Fingerling's entreaties, and related all her adventures. Her recital was frequently interrupted by tears.

"You see, my child," said Fingerling, "how easy it is for a thief to become an assassin when he is surprised in the act of stealing. If those robbers of the heap of oats had seen you, your life would certainly have been in danger. What have you not already suffered as a punishment for your theft of a comb!

"Those blinded robbers were afraid, and fled before a spectre existing solely in their imaginations, while they had no fear of an

all-seeing God. My child, when I approached your bed a few moments since, there was already some one near you ; God was with you, as he is now, and as he is near every one throughout the whole world. He is with the robber in the darkness of the night, and warns him when about to commit a crime. God is present when men steal, and he punishes them when the proper time has come. These two thieves will then, sooner or later, receive their chastisement. You may be sure of it. The pitcher that goes too often to the well will be broken at last. If the robbers knew that a little girl saw them, they would have been very much frightened. Well, then, Sybil, if you wish God to forgive you, and punish you no more, you must ask his pardon for your fault. As for the punishment which comes from men, you must bear it patiently, and must do all in your power to re-establish your reputation, by the most exemplary conduct. Even if I were to beg the school-children and the master never to speak

of the fault committed by you day before yesterday, it would do no good, for such things fly like lightning. May God bless and protect you! Good night!"

Fingerling held out his hand to Sybil, and pressed a kiss upon her brow as a sign of reconciliation. He then went again to bed.

Although Fingerling was only a rag-seller, he had received a good education; he possessed considerable intelligence, and had read much, especially the Bible, so that he could express himself very properly and correctly.

The next morning Augustine complained a little of some pain in her broken arm; but it was chiefly caused by the pressure of the splints surrounding it. The fever had not been violent, and her fright had produced no serious consequences.

Fingerling passed the early morning in brushing his Sunday clothes, in cutting his somewhat uncouth beard, and in waxing his shoes.

"Render thanks to God," said he to his

family. "If I knew any one who would take care of Augustine, I would wish you, my dear wife, to accompany me to church. I enjoy it in anticipation, and my eyes fill with tears when I think upon the sermon that will be preached to-day. Our good pastor will probably allude to the danger to which our child was exposed. Augustine's situation in the bears' den was very like Daniel's when he was thrown to the lions, and the fact was so open, and witnessed by so many! Are you ready, Sybil? We should not be the last at church to-day."

As soon as the first stroke of the bell was heard, Fingerling prepared to depart. He approached Augustine's bed, gave her his hand, and said: "God wills that little children too shall return him thanks; he proved it yesterday, and I will thank him in your name. May God be ever with you in the future!"

Fingerling, accompanied by Sybil, was already near the door, when it opened, and a young boy entered the room.

"Good day, Uncle! Good day, Aunt!" said he, pressing their hands. "Ho, Sybil! are you quite well? But where is the little one? Can she be still asleep?"

"Can this boy already know the history of the bears, and has he come to see us on that account?" asked Fingerling of his wife. "That is hardly possible, although bad news, like good news, sometimes flies with incredible rapidity. But the boy's presence shows me the possibility of seeing you at church with me. Gottlob is intelligent, and is besides a favorite with Augustine; he will take good care of her. Quick, dear wife, and dress yourself!"

While his wife made a hurried toilette, the rag-seller said to Sybil's brother: "Had you heard, Gottlob, that Augustine had broken her arm, and how?"

"Broken her arm!" cried Gottlob, frightened; "I knew nothing of it."

"Augustine will then tell you all about it herself, while you sit with her. Yes, my

child, you came very near never seeing her again. She will tell you all about it. Come, children, the bell is ringing for the second time!" And Fingerling, with his family, went towards the church.

CHAPTER VI.

FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE.

THE rag-seller had been correct in his conjecture, and the pastor chose Augustine's recent danger and miraculous deliverance as the subject of his sermon. He compared her to Daniel in the lion's den. The rag-seller's family thence became the object of general attention, an honor which they never before enjoyed. Fingerling was deeply edified, and prayed to God with much fervor.

After the service was over, Fingerling awaited the pastor before the door of the church, that he might thank him ; and then went in search of the three men who, the evening before, had risked their own lives to save his child from the clutches of the bear.

But Sybil was not permitted to follow her adoptive parents into the burgomaster's house. She remained outside of the door as a kind of punishment for her fault. The last person to whom the rag-seller proffered his thanks was the collector, whose inn was so full, that a man thrown inside of the door would scarcely have fallen upon the floor. All the inhabitants of the neighborhood had assembled there to hear the adventure with the bear from eyewitnesses. Never had the collector sold so much wine as upon that day. Already well satisfied with the numerous company seated around his tables, he only needed the arrival of the rag-seller to complete his delight. Fingerling could not have arrived at a better time.

"I was just about sending for you," said the collector to Fingerling; "every one wishes to see you, and talk with you. What a pity that your little one is forced to keep her bed! Come in, and drink a good glass of wine to strengthen you after yesterday's fright."

But the glass of wine soon changed into a pint; Mrs. Fingerling, and even Sybil, had their portions. The men made a terrible noise in the inn, so that Fingerling could scarcely answer the questions put to him.

"It was my son," said the collector, whose voice rose loudly above that of his guests, "who was the involuntary cause of it all. It was his fault that the little girl, whom you see here, let her sister fall from her arms into the bears' den. My poor child, I assure you, was more dead than alive; but he could not help it, for some one pushed him, and he fell against this little girl. However that all may be, I have promised to pay the doctor, and I will keep my word."

"And I," said a rich peasant, whose face shone with a lively red, thanks to his numerous potations, "I will give this much towards making a present to the little one who fell into the bears' den." So saying, he threw a half-florin on an empty plate which stood before him, then rose and said: "Any one

who wishes to follow Hans Hillig of Rommelshain's example, has the full and entire liberty so to do. Kling, kling, kling, for little Augustine Fingerling!" cried he, making the piece of money execute a lively dance upon the plate.

The half-florin remained the only one of its kind upon the dish; but it was soon followed by a number of smaller coins. The originator of the collection knew how to take advantage of his neighbors' weak points.

"Come, friend Stop, lay down something. Did you not sell two tons of meal only day before yesterday? — Well! neighbor Grundmuller, will you not untie your purse-strings? You have only to kill an additional calf, and you will soon have it all back again! — Ho there! my dear Berndt, how much did you get for the skins you took to market last Monday? Sacrifice only the worth of the tails!"

The rag-seller and his wife shed tears of joy when the countryman placed before them the plate covered with silver.

"Now you can buy something for that little bear-charmer," said he, gayly, as he returned to his place.

Wine and good fortune do not render all men joyful. Fingerling belonged to this class. When he returned home with his pockets filled with silver, he was quite silent, and hung his head as if in sadness.

"I do not know how it is," said he to his wife, "but I cannot rejoice in our good fortune; it is too great, and too unexpected. Heaven grant that it be not followed by some sudden misfortune! Such was the case yesterday. I returned home gay and joyful to suffer such agony! I am still quite uneasy concerning Augustine. Perhaps she may be very ill! After fair weather comes rain —"

"You mean," said Mrs. Fingerling, "that after rain comes fair weather. Had we not trouble enough yesterday to permit us to enjoy ourselves a little to-day?"

"How is Augustine?" asked Fingerling of his nephew, as soon as they had entered the

house. "Has she been very good and very quiet? And has the doctor been here?"

"Yes," said Augustine, without giving Gottlob time to reply, "and he brought me some beautiful bonbons." So saying, she showed with an air of triumph a paper full of sugar-plums.

"Our good Mr. Beyer has kept his word," said Fingerling, gratefully. "Decidedly, there are more good than bad people in the world. But tell me, Augustine, have you eaten many of your bonbons?"

"Not a single one yet," replied the child.

"You have done well," said her father; "but give me your paper, and I will let you have each day as much as will be good for you to eat."

Fingerling perceived that Sybil's eyes were fastened upon the paper with a keen expression of desire, so keen, indeed, that he could not avoid suspecting her of evil intentions. He reflected upon what he had better do in this case, and then divided the contents of the

paper into two equal parts, of which he gave one to his daughter, and the other to Sybil.

"Augustine," said he, "must we not give some bonbons to Sybil, so that she may grow?"

The expression of desire, which at that time before had shone so vividly in Sybil's eyes, suddenly disappeared; she received her share of the bonbons blushing, and with downcast eyes, but did not immediately begin to eat them, as might have been supposed.

"Papa, take some too," said Augustine, "and mamma, and Gottlob also."

"No," replied Fingerling, smiling; "bonbons are only meant for little girls who have broken their arms in bears' dens, and who have been very good. We gave some to Sybil, so that she may grow; but she has had many other good things to-day; she has had wine, and besides, her arms are both in a sound condition, and that is worth

all the bonbons in the world. Is it not so, Sybil?"

The child made an affirmative gesture, and disappeared from the room.

Fingerling turned to his nephew.

"It was a happy accident which led you to visit us to-day; if your village were not at least three leagues distant from here, I should really have thought you had heard an account of yesterday's events. You must have started early, to have arrived before the morning sermon. We are very glad to see you."

"You know the interest I feel in all that concerns you," replied the young man; "but I did not come only to make you a visit. I wanted to ask you, dear Uncle, if you had always your dog Phylax, and if he still drew your cart."

"Yes, certainly; but why this question?"

"Hem! If you had lost your Phylax, I would draw the cart in his stead; I think I have more strength than the good dog."

"You are crazy," said the rag-seller, shaking his head. "You have a good place with your master, and you had better keep it."

"A good place?" replied Gottlob; "I have — To speak frankly, Uncle, I have received my dismissal."

"O, you wrong-headed fellow!" cried the rag-seller angrily, "and you tell me that as quietly as if you were saying, God bless you! Here is a boy whom I have brought up, whom I have fed until he is able to earn his own bread, and now he falls back upon my hands. Ah! I felt it when the money rang in my pocket, and when the wine warmed my stomach. I said that some new misfortune menaced us; and not only did it threaten us, but it had already happened. Ah! you bad boy, what have you done that your master was obliged to send you away so soon?"

"Nothing wrong, dear Uncle," replied Gottlob, wiping away a tear. "In order not to be obliged to pay the tax for me, my master told

the bailiff that I was not in his service, but only with him temporarily. That vexed me to begin with. Then he yesterday required that I should go with him to the castle forest, and help him to steal wood; I refused, and he turned me out of doors."

"Ah! that is another thing!" said the rag-seller. "I was sure at first that you were wrong, my boy, and I willingly retract all I said. Give me your hand, my good Gottlob! and now we are good friends again. You shall stay with me, and share my bread until I can find another place for you; I see no reason yet for parting with my faithful Phylax. Farmer Hans Hillig of Rommelshain looks to me like a very fine man; perhaps he might employ you in taking care of his horses. But even if I cannot arrange that, I have another project;—one might even think that Providence itself had arranged it all. My cart will not hold all the rags that I can buy during the week, and I have often thought of buying a hand-

cart, which would carry at least three times as much. But where could I get the money, and some one to draw it for me? And now, on this very day, I have received money, and you your dismissal! It is really extraordinary! Well, we will begin our trade in rags on a larger scale, and so all will be for the best. Thus does the misfortune which we most dread frequently turn to the profit of those who love and serve God.

"Bravo! I am again in quite a good humor."

The family of the rag-seller were still at dinner, when Phylax suddenly began to bark at the door with great violence.

"What is the matter with the dog?" said Fingerling; "he rarely shows his teeth so fiercely. Go, Sybil, and see what it is."

At this moment the door opened, and Noack, the keeper of the bears, entered. Sybil was terrified; she grew pale, and endeavored to hide herself.

"You have a very bad dog there," began

the keeper in his hoarse voice. "He was very desirous of giving me a bite. My bears have more manners than he has. It is most likely you do not give him enough to eat. If I were to follow your example, and were not to give sufficient food to the animals confided to my care, not much would now remain of your daughter. I get little enough money for keeping them; but I prefer depriving myself of something, that no one may say they want for proper nourishment.

"I came here to tell you that the castellan wishes to speak with you, and hear from your own lips the account of your child's wonderful deliverance. My poor bear refuses to eat since the child was taken away from him. He behaves like one possessed. Come as soon as possible, for great people are not very fond of waiting."

"My dog is usually very good-natured," replied Fingerling, "and I cannot think what induces him to act so towards you. He is only cross with rascals, and you are not one."

Fingerling watched the keeper attentively ; the latter changed color, but so slightly, that it required as attentive an observer as Fingerling to have remarked it. He then continued : " Will you be kind enough to present my respects to the castellan. I will obey his commands and go with you, and you will see that my dog is as gentle as a lamb."

But Phylax did not justify his master's praises, when he left the house accompanied by Noack. He approached the rag-seller wagging his tail, but he tried at the same time to bite the keeper's legs, which action cost him several unwonted blows from the rag-seller's stick.

" Very well ! You will not have much longer to bite my legs," grumbled Noack, when he was alone ; " only come once into my neighborhood ! I know teeth longer and stronger than yours, and beasts which care as much for dog or cat flesh as they do for beef."

" Return thanks to God," said the Castel-

lan to Fingerling, when the latter had given him as detailed an account as possible of the events which had occurred on the preceding day, "and thank him for having terminated all so fortunately. Mr. Bruin was within his own four walls, and had full liberty to do as he pleased. You could not have inflicted the least injury upon him, or our good King and Elector would have punished you severely. There are plenty of children in the country, but a Polish bear is not so easily found; and, happily, none of the Schellenberg people even thought of shooting him; they would have paid dearly for it. But do you know, master rag-seller, that, the evening before, Heaven seemed to have sent us a warning? There was such a noise, that I thought the whole rabbit-house was about to fall. What a terrible commotion in the middle of the night! It was about the hour for ghosts. A magnificent walnut-press, almost as high as the room, broke all to pieces, with everything that was upon or within it, including

rare busts of celebrated personages, and a whole service of porcelain; even your little girl was not worth so much as all those precious articles!"

Fingerling would have been very willing to tell the castellan what he had learned from Sybil on the subject of the pretended ghost; he even thought it his duty to do so, for he who knows of a theft, and does not denounce it, is also guilty of breaking the commandments. But he did not declare what he knew, because he had no sufficient proof. Of what value was the testimony of a child of eight years old, who might easily be deceived by the darkness, and who, terrified and trembling, might readily have mistaken the voice of any other person for that of the keeper of the bears? Fingerling did not wish to throw suspicion on an innocent person, or thus excite the vengeance of the keeper towards Sybil and himself. He however felt himself called upon to warn the castellan, and put him on his guard.

"Sir," said he, "are you quite sure that the disturbance was not caused by robbers? Was there nothing in the room which might be carried off without being missed?"

"What are you thinking of, my good fellow?" replied the castellan with an air of disdain.

"I would not advise a robber to enter this castle in search of anything; I keep my oats in that room, and no thief would risk his neck for so trifling an object."

"Hem!" said the rag-seller, "I would not trust them; we sometimes find robbers where we do not look for them. Were I in your place, my lord, I would have my oats measured from time to time."

"That would be truly worth the trouble!" said the castellan; "the Elector furnishes the food for my horses; and when it is all gone, I have only to buy more."

Fingerling had been expending his words in a desert air. He did not yet, however, feel his mind quite at ease, and, upon maturer

reflection, resolved to communicate the case to his spiritual adviser, in order to relieve his soul from the fear of complicity. He did so; and having received the pastor's approbation, he felt quite tranquil under the assurance that he had done his duty.

CHAPTER VII.

ANGLING FOR BEARS.

FINGERLING soon found an opportunity of buying a good hand-cart at a reasonable price. Gottlob and Phylax drew it, while the rag-seller pushed with all his might.

Mrs. Fingerling and Sybil were not idle, but sorted the rags which had been bought, according to their quality and fineness. The good woman had taken the trouble to put the linen spotted with blood, which her husband had bought in Oederan, in water, and even to wash it carefully, that it might possess more value in the eyes of the paper manufacturer. She was amply recompensed for her labor, for she found a very fine handkerchief in the bundle, which, although it had been cut, would still answer some useful purpose. In one of

the corners, magnificently embroidered, was a count's coronet, and a cipher surrounded by arabesques. Mrs. Fingerling mended it as nicely as she could, for it was quite large enough to make a chemisette for her little Augustine, whose arm was recovering as rapidly as possible.

At the end of a week, when the rag-seller again returned home, he said: "I do not know what has happened to our dog; but since I forgot him, the day that our little Augustine met with her accident, he has lost his gayety. He draws the new cart with evident ill-humor. Perhaps he feels hurt at having a two-legged companion. Perhaps, too, he may have some pain in his limbs, as often happens to men. He had better remain at home a few days to recover."

A short vacation was then granted to Phylax, which he seemed to regard with great indifference. A few days later, he had entirely disappeared. No one knew what had become of him. Mrs. Fingerling was very much dis-

tressed, for she knew her husband was fond of the dog, and would be vexed at his disappearance. Besides, Phylax was a member of the family whom all loved, and whose loss therefore would occasion a general mourning. At first they hoped that he would return, but in vain. One might also readily observe, that the number of cats and dogs in Schellenberg diminished weekly, without any visible cause.

One day Sybil came running to her father, with her whole face bathed in perspiration. "Papa!" she cried, in a most excited manner, "I know now who has taken our Phylax. The keeper of the bears! I was sitting behind a juniper-tree gathering a bunch of violets, when I heard a dog making the strangest noise; I looked to see what it was, and there was the bear-keeper, with a rope tied round the neck of the blacksmith's dog. He pulled and pulled until the poor creature could no longer stir, and then said, 'Another little saving, and a good meal for my beasts!' Having put the dead dog into a bag, he dis-

appeared. He has done the same with all the cats and dogs that have been mourned over in Schellenberg. You may be quite sure of it, dear father!"

"But are you not mistaken? Was it certainly the bear-keeper?" exclaimed Fingerling, astounded. "After all, he who is in the habit of stealing oats, will not hesitate to appropriate whatever falls within his reach. What a wicked man! See how the discovery of one crime leads to that of another, until the measure of Divine patience is full, and then the criminal receives his just punishment."

"Poor Phylax!" said Augustine, weeping, as did also several other members of the family.

"He must have had a presentiment of his fate," said the mother; "and that was the reason why he was so sad, and refused to eat even the most dainty morsels."

"And now the bears will eat him, or have already eaten him," added Gottlob.

Augustine shuddered. "O me!" she cried, "what great big teeth the bears had! I only now begin to feel really afraid of them."

"But then remember how much better it is that Phylax should have been devoured, than my dear little girl," said Fingerling, tenderly embracing Augustine, who was already upon her feet, although she still carried her arm in a sling. "In truth, we no longer have any reason to complain that Gottlob has lost his place, and that Farmer Hillig does not need a boy to take care of his horses. We can draw the cart as well without the dog, and it will be one less expense in the house. God always knows how to turn even the greatest misfortunes to some good end. But, Sybil, do not tell any one what you have seen, for we must have the proofs in our hands before we can bring the criminal to justice."

"I detest no one so much as that same keeper," said Mrs. Fingerling.

"Who knows in what nocturnal expedition he gained that hollow voice of his. Thieves can stand a whole night in the rain, the storm, or the cold; but they will not take a single

step to do a good action. However, a just chastisement is always in store for them!"

Augustine's arm recovered rapidly, and at the end of a few weeks the splints were taken off, and she merely continued to wear the sling as a matter of precaution. Sybil was closely watched by the rag-seller and his wife, and had not repeated her fault, so that she was again somewhat reinstated in their good opinion. The surgeon Beyer came occasionally to examine Augustine's arm. The child had already been several times at church, for at that time people thought that children should thus go and pray to God, in his peculiar temple.

One September day, when Fingerling had gone with his nephew to drive his little trade, Augustine was seated on the stone bench before the house door, and played with a rag doll which her mother had made for her. As for Sybil, she was in the wood gathering fagots. Several children, among whom were Augustus, the collector's son, and Henry, the

burgomaster's eldest child, passed before Fingerling's cottage; they carried bits of meat, and other eatables, tied to the end of long strings.

“Come with us, Augustine!” said the collector's son. “We are going to pay a visit to your friend the bear; have you anything to say to him?”

Augustine shook her head.

“The bear has eaten up our poor Phylax,” said she. “I can never forgive him for that.”

“But how can that be?” asked Henry.

“Noack stole him from us, and killed him,” said Augustine, with a mysterious air. “But do not tell any one. Papa says there will soon be neither cat nor dog in the town.”

“What a rogue!” cried Augustus. “The little one speaks truly, and it is no longer astonishing that the keeper can drink wine all the week. He takes it from our house in a pitcher, instead of a bottle, so that every one may think it is only beer. He is a real rascal!”

The children went directly towards the bears' den, at the end of which were several old beech-trees, whose branches overhung the wall, having been imprudently suffered to remain untrimmed. These trees grew on the outside of the den, and the children climbed them. They desired to amuse themselves at the expense of their lordships, the bears, and had brought bits of meat, which they permitted to dangle down into the den, thus tempting Master Bruin's appetite; no sooner did he attempt to seize them than they were hastily withdrawn.

"Ah! there is a jump!" cried Augustus.
"Another now! Courage, Master Bruin!"

"He had my bit of meat already in his mouth," said Henry, "and yet he was forced to let it go. Does that vex you, old fellow? Ah! how he growls, and what long rows of ugly teeth he shows!"

"Hop, Master Bruin, hop!" cried Charles Kung. "A little higher, old fellow. Look at him! he lies there like a great brown sack."

Did you get a fall on your nose, poor hairy rascal? Try it again; here is a magnificent piece of beef! Ah! how he smells it! Is it good? Jump, then! What! nothing again?"

The strings and their enticing bait were in constant motion. Poor Bruin was like Tantalus;* the most delightful fruits hung within his reach, but were blown away by an envious wind, whenever he attempted to reach them.

The bears' leaps and somersets, their furious grunts and growls, their loud and angry breathing, gave great pleasure to these little mischiefs. When the poor beasts were quite tired, and could make no more efforts, the pieces of meat were lowered until they hung before their very eyes, gleaming with desire, and even touched them, as if they had now indeed become stationary; again would the

* A mythological personage, who, as a punishment for divers crimes, was condemned to perpetual hunger and thirst. He stood in a lake, with the water up to his chin, but whenever he attempted to drink, the water retired. And the same happened with the tempting fruits which overhung his head, whenever he stretched forth his hand to pluck them.

creatures begin their efforts to attain the coveted prize, and again would they fall back, exhausted and out of breath.

The children all watched until one of the animals had become quite tranquil. He was beset on all sides by their tempting offers; but at his first movement, all were again flying through the air; the game was renewed, with the shouts, cries, and mockeries of the delighted children.

“Again! Master Bruin; come, up with you! What a jump! You understand it better than a mountebank. Come now! once more! Eh! —”

All were suddenly silent. A stifled cry was heard through the foliage. All the children hid themselves among the leaves, or behind the trunks of the trees.

The strings were motionless, and the meat fell from the trembling hands of the little band. Where joy had lately reigned so noisily, the most profound silence had succeeded to the tumult; the crackling of the

branches alone broke the stillness, and betrayed the presence of animated beings.

“They ate and drank, they were filled with joy and diverted themselves,” says the Bible, “when suddenly night came and surprised them.”

Thus was it with these unfortunate children. Their joy was changed to sorrow, and their gayety into anguish. It has been said that a single step often leads from life to death. Here it was a leap. The bear, in a high state of irritation, threw himself with a desperate bound upon one of the lower limbs, and succeeded in maintaining his hold. Augustus, the collector's son, was the nearest to the bear, and heard his deep, fierce growl more distinctly than the others. Although the boy was on a beech, he in no wise resembled a leaf of that tree, but rather an aspen-leaf, which, as you know, is always trembling and in motion. But this comparison is not quite just, for in place of being green, Augustus was at this moment the color of a cream-

cheese. Should he await the bear's approach, or endeavor to fly? He was, fortunately, too much terrified to attempt the latter course, and he clung to the thick branch of the beech, as closely and tightly as the ivy winds itself around the limbs of this king of the forest.

This state of anguish lasted during several seconds; but the bear was once more merciful towards his pitiless persecutors. Instead of gratifying his vengeful feelings, and indulging his taste for children's flesh, he forgot everything in his delight at having regained his liberty; he climbed up the branches of the beech overhanging his prison, and then, letting himself fall upon the ground, he fled as fast as his legs could carry him.

The children hidden in the tree finally recovered their voices.

"Is he gone?" was asked on all sides in a stifled voice.

"Which way?"

"What shall we do?"

"Shall we stay here, or shall we run home?"

"If we should happen to fall into his clutches!"

"O how dreadful!"

"We shall be held responsible for his escape."

"What will our parents say?"

"And the whole village?"

"If the bear were to meet some one, and eat him up."

"I never could forgive myself, were I to live a thousand years!"

"I can tell you something about that," said Augustus, who was the last to recover from his fright. "I know what terror it causes one. What reproaches did I not receive when Augustine met with her accident, and yet that was much less my fault than what has happened to-day."

The children ran home as fast as possible, and their cries of "The bear has escaped! The bear is loose!" occasioned general consternation. The mothers rushed out of their houses, to insure the safety of their little

ones playing in the streets. The men seized their arms, barricaded the entrances to their dwellings, and closed their lower shutters. After these previous preparations, the most courageous, and those who possessed fire-arms, assembled to scour the neighborhood, and kill the animal, if they should find him.

No one asked the Elector's permission; it was a case of legitimate self-defence, of the preservation of life; and the pleasure and amusement of the Elector were not taken into consideration.

It so chanced that the woman who watched the dead of the little town, and rendered them the last offices, had just left a house where she had been putting the last garment upon a man who, a few hours before, had laid aside the torments and cares of life. She was the first living creature whom the bear encountered.

In one moment the ferocious animal had thrown the woman upon the ground; but she had either fainted through fear, or she had

sufficient presence of mind to counterfeit death, for the bear turned the inanimate body over with his paws several times, then snuffed it, and continued his way.*

A troop of horned cattle returning from pasture, and belonging to a farm named Jaegerhof, attracted Master Bruin's attention, and he leaped into the midst of the drove; the most courageous among them at first showed their pointed weapons, and successfully repulsed the attacks of the shaggy monster; but a panic terror soon seized upon them, and they fled precipitately towards their

The popular belief that the bear will not touch a dead body seems to be a very ancient prejudice. According to the testimony of the naturalists quoted by Buffon, we find that the bears, red or brown, which are found, not only in Savoy, but in the high mountains, the vast forests, and in nearly all the deserts of the earth, devour not only living animals, but even the most infected garbage of the slaughter-houses. We may add, that the bear shows less appetite for flesh than any other wild carnivorous animal. He prefers fruits and roots, and shows a wonderful passion for honey, which he is not afraid to seek among the trees, even in the very hives of the bees.

pens. The herdsmen, seeing a beast in the herd which did not usually make a part of it, and which, besides, did not seem to be a domestic animal, fled, uttering cries of terror and dismay.

Several armed men then approached, and began to fire upon the bear. He fled from the field, and took refuge in a garden, where a shower of balls soon terminated his life and his devastations.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY TO THE CAPITAL.

TOWARDS the end of the month of October, on the road which leads from Augustusburg to the city of Dresden, the capital of Saxony, was seen a heavy wagon, on which was a very large and solid cage, having in one of its sides a window about a foot square, furnished with stout iron bars. From time to time the shaggy head of an enormous animal appeared at the bars, and uttered an angry growl, or an impatient snort.

Behind this wagon was another and a smaller one, drawn by human beings, and without any cover. This was Fingerling's hand-cart, full of rag-bags, and drawn by Sybil and Gottlob, while Fingerling pushed behind.

"I started from home," said Fingerling, the first time they made a halt, "with a much lighter heart than usual; for in that wagon is the last bear of Augustusburg, which they are taking to Dresden."

"I hope we shall never see him again, nor one of his kind," said Gottlob.

"It must seem very strange to him," replied Fingerling, "when the great dogs are let loose upon him."

"What do they do that for?" asked Gottlob. "They need only send a few good balls through his head, and Master Bruin would soon cease to live."

"But that is not what they want," answered the rag-seller; "they desire to amuse themselves as long as possible. The school-master told me all about that long ago. Great personages, like the Elector, the princes, the counts, etc., tire of their life of pleasure, as we do of our poverty. Then, to vary their enjoyments, they witness representations of poverty, misery, illness, or death, or even

sometimes of the most horrible crimes, so that they must weep when they are only the spectators. They call that playing at comedy, or tragedy. Bear-fights are also a kind of comedy, and the more a bear is torn by the dogs, and forced to make a desperate defence, the more agreeable is it to the bystanders. During the late king's reign, they had even combats between lions, tigers, panthers, and other strange animals, which enjoy tearing each other to pieces. But I assure you that such flesh was only to be obtained at very high prices, for a single lion or tiger cost sometimes more than a whole flock of sheep, or a herd of cattle. The court, too, often represent passages in peasant life, when the king plays the part of a simple villager, and the princes and princesses those of herdsmen and shepherdesses."

"Ah!" cried Sybil, clasping her hands in astonishment, "do the princesses really milk cows, and make butter? Do they sleep in the cow-pens, and clean out the stable-yards?"

"No indeed!" replied Fingerling, laughing, "they take good care to do nothing of the sort."

"Does the king then wear a coarse shirt, like one of our peasants?" continued Gottlob. "Does he eat oatmeal bread, and pumpkin soup? Does he guide the plough, and use the flail in his own barn?"

"He does not even think of it," replied Fingerling; "they only play a comedy; as the actors do not really weep, kill, or poison themselves, feel hunger, or die of want, so the court lords and ladies only pretend to be peasants, to amuse each other. But let us go on. By to-morrow evening we may be in Dresden. If it is true that the paper-manufacturer in Dresden gives a florin more for every hundred pounds of rags than ours does, our journey will be well paid for. At the same time, we shall have an opportunity of seeing the capital and the court. A native of Schellenberg, who was as poor and as humble as myself, has become a scullion at the palace,

and such an employment may very well suffice to keep a man. I hope that we may see many fine things under his protection. He is not only a countryman, but a schoolmate of mine; and he was always a well-disposed, good boy. Courage, children, here is a hill—Ho! hey! ugh! ugh!”

At that time there were as yet no macadamized roads in Saxony, but there were many deep bogs, and travelling was not very rapid. The two vehicles consequently advanced at about the same pace. That which was drawn by the two children once even passed the horse cart, upon which the keeper was seated, in front of the cage.

“Ragman,” cried Noack to Fingerling, in a jeering tone of voice, “you give yourself a great deal of trouble. Why have you not harnessed your ugly dog? What has become of that charming beast?”

“You must know that better than I do,” replied Fingerling, wounded. “He will be found, I suppose, with the other dogs and cats which have disappeared from the town.”

The keeper returned no answer, but he made a grimace expressive of content. At the same time, he ate by turns of a great piece of bread covered with butter, and a slice of cold pork, drinking at intervals from a large earthen pitcher.

"Our collector's wine," said he, "is by no means to be disdained, but I hope that Dresden wine will be still better; is it not so, friend rag-seller?"

"Gluttony brings poverty," replied the rag-seller, dryly.

"In truth, I have good living, and you, poverty by the cartful, as I see. Are you going to Dresden with your beggars' clouts?"

"Rail on, you hardened sinner," muttered Fingerling. "Who knows if Divine justice will not soon overtake you? Courage, my children; let us go as far as we can from that wicked man, who finds pleasure in insulting our poverty."

The rag-seller obtained from the paper-manufacturer in Dresden four crowns more

for his cargo of rags than he could have obtained at Schellenberg. Enchanted by this gain, which more than paid all the expenses of his journey, he resolved to procure a little pleasure for himself and his companions. After he had put up his cart at a cheap inn, and had dressed himself and his children in the Sunday clothes which they had brought with them, he went to look for that friend of his childhood who had been promoted to the office of scullion to the royal and electoral court. Preserving the openness of his mountain birth and character, the honest man did not blush at the appearance of his poor compatriot. He received him very amicably, and promised to render his stay in the capital as agreeable as possible.

“Above all,” said Fingerling, — the simple-hearted countryman from the Erzgebirge, — “do we desire to see our dear Elector; but quite near, so that I can describe to my wife him whom all call the father of Saxony.”

The court scullion looked quite serious.

“Our mighty Prince,” said he, hesitatingly, “only shows himself to his court, and the great dignitaries; for he is usually overwhelmed by applications and petitions whenever he makes his appearance among his people. That is not agreeable to our master, so that, when he is about to leave his palace, the streets are first cleared of all stragglers.”

“And yet they call him most gracious sovereign!” said Fingerling, astonished. “God, in the Bible, is also called gracious; but every man, even the poorest, can approach him, and implore his mercy, as often as he will, by day or by night.”

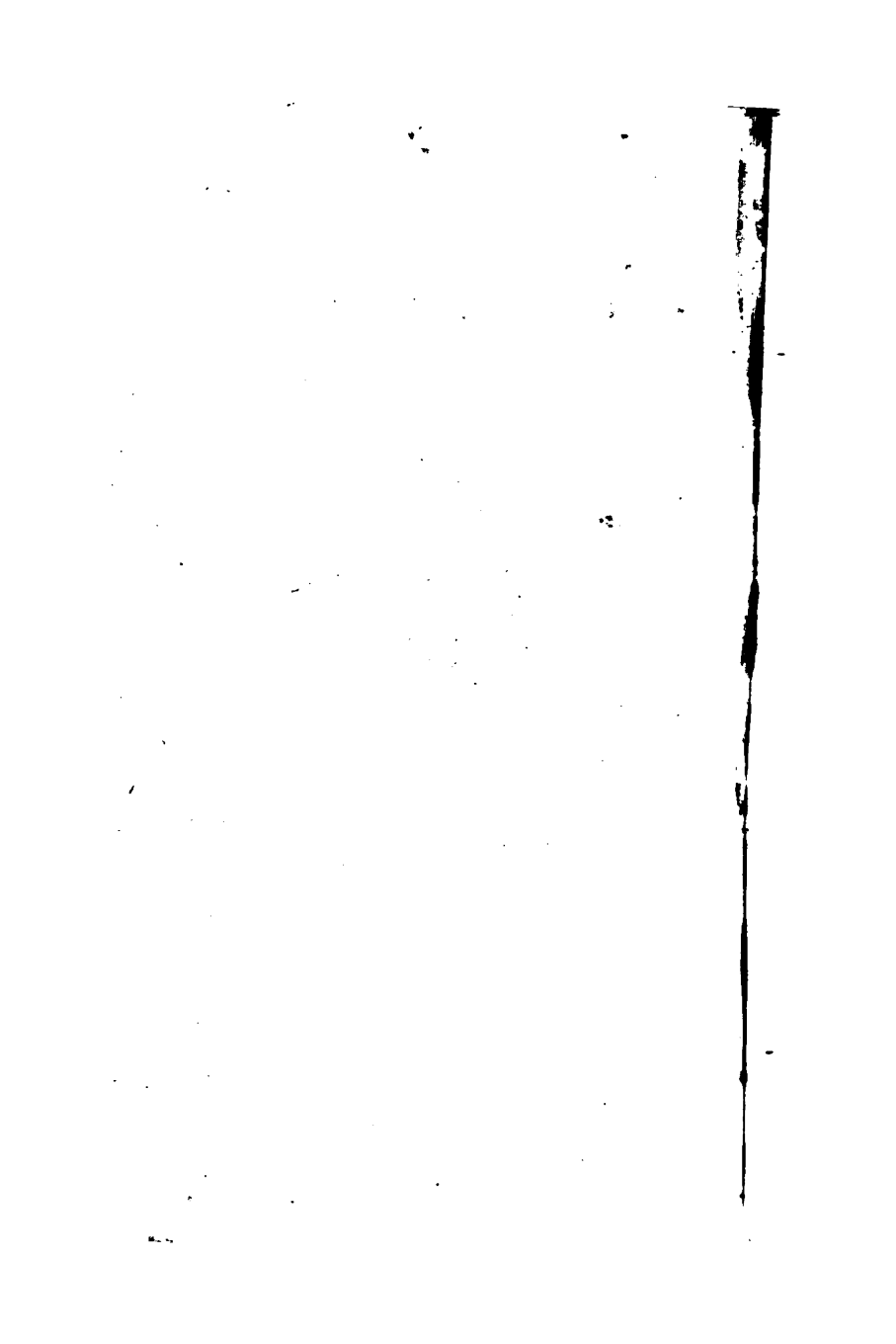
“Ah!” exclaimed the courtier, “you cannot make a comparison between God and our most gracious sovereign. God is rich enough to give whenever he is asked, and so he can give always without being fatigued. Our good King and Elector sometimes gives too, and even gives much, but then only to a few persons. To make up for it, he demands much more from his subjects in taxes, because

he needs a great deal of money. You who live in Schellenberg can form no idea of all this."

The courtier took the travellers into the cathedral, which had been built but a short time before, and which is now one of the most remarkable monuments in Dresden. Fingerling and his awe-stricken children lifted their feet like storks, when told that they were stepping upon precious marbles. They continued their way as if they were walking upon eggs. What a lofty arch! What an immense building! They nearly twisted their necks in endeavoring to examine the ceiling. The church at Schellenberg might have been placed in the vast enclosure, I know not how many times. But when these simple peasants from the Erzgebirge heard the organ, and listened to the deep and impressive tones which rolled through the vast precincts as if God were indeed speaking to men, then was their wonder raised to the highest degree, and they gazed in respectful astonishment on



They gazed in respectful astonishment.



those immense tubes, and the carvings, which had cost, as their countryman Heuts informed them, no less than a thousand crowns. They silently approached the high altar, made of marble, and adorned with three rows of silver candlesticks, bearing lighted wax tapers.

"Each one of those six largest candlesticks," said the court chandler, in a low voice, "cost eight thousand crowns."

"Eight thousand crowns!" said Fingerling to himself. "Ten houses in Schellenberg would not cost so much."

"And the picture," continued the other, "cost eighty-four thousand crowns."

The rag-seller was petrified. "How? The image, which does not even pretend to be a likeness of him who during his life was sold for fifteen crowns, or thirty pieces of the coin of that time,—the image of our Saviour, who possessed not even a stone upon the earth whereon to lay his head, cost more than all Schellenberg, with its houses, its gardens, and its church!"

In his amazement, Fingerling no longer heard the magnificent music, which was soon after accompanied by a choir with voices like angels. His two children listened to it with wonder and delight. The court friend suddenly tapped the rag-seller on the shoulder, and said to him in a low tone: "Look, Fingerling, there, close by the high altar, sits our king, with his wife, the queen."

Fingerling hastily glanced in the direction indicated. Notwithstanding the height and the distance, he perceived in the royal pew a gentleman of about sixty years of age, with curled and powdered hair. A golden star shone upon his magnificent embroidered vest, above which he wore a surtout. He held a little book in his hand, in which he seemed to be reading very fervently. This was Augustus III., King of Poland and Elector of Saxony.

"Look, my children," said Fingerling to Gottlob and Sybil; "look up there and you will see the father of your country. Look at

him well, for perhaps you will never again behold him during your whole lives — ”

“ Silence ! ” said a Swiss, armed with a long halberd, addressing the rag-seller, who, quite stupefied, could only gaze upon the official in silent wonder. The man continued to mutter : “ No one must speak here, especially when His Majesty is present. One word more, and I will close the doors on you.”

Fingerling, as well as the children, cast an uneasy glance towards their protector. But he, probably recognizing in the Swiss a superior in rank, said nothing, and signed to them that they must obey his instructions.

The three natives of Schellenberg had lost all desire to remain longer in the church. When they were again in the open air, Fingerling drew a long breath.

“ And that was our sovereign ! ” said he. “ Did you look well at him, children ? ”

“ Certainly,” replied Gottlob ; “ he is the very image of Amadeus the potter, except

that Amadeus does not wear an embroidered vest, and powder in his hair."

"But," cried the rag-seller, quite angrily, "how can you talk so foolishly! If the man with the halberd had heard you say that!"

"O that is nothing!" said the court scullion to his friend. "To-day," he continued, "the king was not in his grand attire. When that is the case, he wears at least the worth of a million in precious stones; all the buttons on his coat are then made of single diamonds, worth eight thousand crowns apiece."

"Eight thousand crowns again!" sighed Fingerling.

"Each epaulette is at least worth an Augustusburg."

"What a weight! An epaulette like that must be very heavy to carry!"

"But the most precious thing of all is in the king's hat. Let me see — what is it they call it? An agrafe, I believe. This agrafe is a clasp, composed of a single green diamond, about as large as a small pigeon's egg, but

which cost four hundred thousand crowns; yes indeed! four tons of gold, not a farthing less. The king bought this diamond only a few years since; and soon after, he had no money to pay for cannon to aid in the siege of Brunn. The citizens of that town were not at all sorry; who knows if they ever discovered that they owed their lives and the preservation of their city to a stone?"

"A single stone, as large—or rather as small—as a pigeon's egg, cost four tons of gold!" said Fingerling, shaking his head; "that is not possible. What is there so extraordinary about it, that it should be so dear?"

"Its brightness, hardness, and rarity are the wonderful qualities which render it so precious. No other king nor emperor has a green diamond. That speaks for itself. And then you may put that diamond on an anvil, and strike it with the heaviest hammer; you cannot break it, or even tarnish its lustre. Its brilliancy, and the glowing fire which shines through it—"

"But when the king wears the diamond in his hat, he cannot see it shining; neither can he see his epaulettes, or his buttons; what use then are all these costly articles to him?"

"Others see them," replied the court scullion, "admire them, and envy the royal proprietor. The king has no need to admire them himself."

"How many times a year does our king wear his precious jewels?" asked Fingerling, hastily.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied the courtier; "whenever there are any very distinguished visitors, or when the States General are assembled, or upon other great occasions. He wears his grand robes at least once, sometimes two, three, or even four times a year."

"If the stones are really worth a million," said Fingerling, deeply absorbed in calculation, "the interest would be forty thousand crowns a year; and all that for the sake of wearing once, perhaps, such frivolous orna-

ments! Ah! if we, the poor citizens of Schellenberg, needed anything, and he were to let us have the forty thousand crowns interest! Then would many diamonds, bright tears of joy, sparkle in his children's eye."

"You speak according to your own understanding of the matter," said the court scullion. "A king must be dressed differently from a scullion or a rag-seller. Without that, what difference would there be between them? How would any one know the king?"

"How?" asked Fingerling. "By the greatness and extent of his clemency and goodness; by his care for his subjects."

"Moderate your language a little, I beseech you," replied the scullion, "or you will have us both shut up in the fortress of Koenigstein, or at least in the city prison. Be silent, and listen to what I am about to tell you. This evening, there is a grand representation at the court theatre; I will beg my friend, the court lamp-lighter, to be kind enough to get us places in the gallery, or

somewhere else, so that you can see well. So, you must come to my house at five o'clock precisely."

The man left them, and Fingerling walked with Gottlob and Sybil upon the great bridge over the Elbe. That was really a masterpiece, and our good friends from Schellenberg had never seen anything like it. The whole bridge, however, with its arches, its pillars, its magnificent iron balustrade, and its stone benches, had not cost as much as the little green stone, which weighed heavily upon the rag-seller's heart. Fingerling's eyes fell by chance upon Sybil, who, with her pretty face and neat dress, was by no means an object of shame to her adoptive father.

"I believe," said he, in surprise, "that you have put on Augustine's embroidered chemi-sette."

The child blushed, and replied, somewhat embarrassed: "Mamma put it up in my bundle, so that I might look nicely in the great city."

Fingerling was silent, and thought his wife a little vain.

They walked about during a long time, admiring the fine things which they saw upon their way, until, the hour for the beginning of the play having arrived, they returned to the dwelling of their good friend and compatriot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLAY.

NIGHT had already commenced to darken when Fingerling went to the theatre, accompanied by his friend and his children. After exchanging a few words with the keeper of a little back door, the spectators, both great and small, entered. Darkness reigned in the interior, only feebly lighted by a few lamps, whose glimmering rays were not bright enough to enable them to distinguish the strange and novel objects filling the spacious hall in which they found themselves. Men went and came in silence, now disappearing behind a painted curtain, and now emerging from the shadow of some artificial tree or rock. They soon found the lamp-lighter of the court theatre.

He placed the rag-seller behind one of the side scenes, and led the children, by a wooden staircase, to a small gallery, where he left them. When alone, they felt very much afraid. If he should forget them, and leave them to find their own way out of this labyrinth! However, the fear of being again silenced kept them quiet, and they could only exchange their thoughts by means of looks and signs.

The spectators soon arrived in great numbers, and with them came the lights. Heaven and earth were in an equal state of commotion. The heavens descended, and the earth took the form of rooms, of landscapes, streets, gardens, rocks, trees, until finally the stage represented a magnificent hall.

The children's eyes were dazzled from time to time by the vivid light of the lamps, suspended from movable pillars, and usually presenting their shaded sides towards them. Behind the canvas walls walked various personages, strangely dressed, who seemed to

be reading from rolls of paper, and who sometimes talked aloud with one another. Above the children hung long streamers of various colors. In the corners of the immense space stood men, motionless as statues, who bore vessels of water, and portable pumps.

A lively sound of music was soon after heard behind an immense curtain, and at the point where it touched the floor was placed a round box, open on one side. A man's head suddenly appeared from within an opening in the floor; two shoulders, and a pair of human arms, soon followed. They belonged to a man who seated himself in the box, placed a large book before him, and began to turn over the leaves. Then the ringing of a little bell was heard, and the great curtain, moved by some invisible hands, rose with a slight rustling and creaking. The children could scarcely repress a cry of surprise, when they saw through the large opening a multitude of persons, all seated beside one another, with their faces turned towards the stage.

The play finally began. Men wearing long gowns, with immense beards, some armed with sabres, and others with swords, pikes, bucklers, and poniards, defiled upon the stage. Women, young and old, and even little children, all strangely dressed, also entered. They harangued, disputed, and even fought. The children screamed, and the women cried. A king, whom they recognized by the crown upon his head, made his appearance; he walked about, sang, and recommended tranquillity to his subjects. A young girl then replied to him, also singing, and in a very lamentable tone; finally all began to sing, or rather cry, at once, so that no one could distinguish anything that was said; at least Gottlob and Sybil tried in vain to discover what it all was about. The man in the little box talked, and cried out too, although he by no means seemed to belong to the society of the personages so strangely dressed. Gottlob was quite surprised that one of the men in the long gowns did not give him a

box on the ear, to teach him to be quiet while the others were speaking; they came quite near enough to him to have done it, had they possessed the inclination. There were more than a hundred persons on the stage, of whom some were killed, others disappeared into a chasm which opened at their feet; and one woman finally rose into the air, in a car drawn by swans, which Sybil took for geese, while Gottlob was sure they were turkeys.

A young girl who had stabbed herself with a dagger, sung a long tirade before she fell and breathed her last. Sybil pitied her, and could not restrain her tears, which flowed hot and fast down her cheeks. But when the curtain was again lowered, all the dead came to life, and even the unfortunate young girl revived, and began to sing and dance. The other actors were hard at work studying their papers.

There were also several disputes. One individual, very badly dressed, a slave in the public market, gave a sound box on the ears

to a general of high rank, accusing him of having replied at the wrong time, and of having tripped him, while in fact he had never lost his balance. After the play had recommenced, the two men who had just been quarrelling, embraced each other most tenderly, and swore an eternal friendship.

The second act was much more extraordinary than the first. Sybil trembled for her father's life, and even for her brother's and her own.

A troop of bears, lions, tigers, panthers, camels, and elephants came out of a thick forest, and rushed upon the stage. Fortunately, at that moment it was quite empty. At length a man appeared, but totally unarmed; he had neither sword nor battle-axe. The ferocious animals flew upon him with the most terrible howlings. But he drew a flute from his pocket, placed it near his lips, and all the beasts fled as if by miracle, although its tones were scarcely louder than those of the rag-seller's pipe; he even gave

the last lion a blow on the head with his flute. The beast did not seem to be at all disturbed by this indignity, although he might have readily knocked the man down with a single blow of his powerful tail ; at least this fact is found recorded in the annals of Schellenberg.

But the most fearful scene was reserved for the end. The stage represented an agitated sea, the waves rose to a considerable height, the rain fell fast, and the wind roared. Suddenly, a vessel appeared, which seemed about to sink at every moment. The lightning flashed in the distance, and the thunder began to roll louder and louder. Sybil trembled, for she feared nothing as much as a storm. She would have shut her eyes, and closed her ears, if she had been able ; she looked round below, endeavoring to see her adoptive father, and gather strength from his presence. A woman then appeared upon the stage ; she climbed up a steep rock which jutted out into the sea. When she perceived

the ship, which was sailing rapidly away, she wrung her hands in despair; the poor creature untied her scarf from her shoulders, and used it as a signal. The woman had certainly been forgotten by the people in the ship. When she saw that her cries and signs were unheeded, she began to sing to a musical accompaniment. All at once, there was a clap of thunder loud enough to shake the whole house to its very foundations; it burst just above Sybil's head, so that she heard it roll exactly like the rumbling of a heavy wagon.

Sybil fell on her knees, cried out: "O, the thunder has fallen on the house!" and hid her face in her apron.

"Take care, child!" said a rough man's voice directly behind her, "take care that something heavier does not fall on your back; that will certainly happen if you scream so loud. You will then be forced to leave this place, and we too. Why did you come, if you are afraid?"

Sybil, terrified, raised her head, not to see the man behind her, but to know what had become of the woman on the rock. But she had disappeared; having flung herself into the water, as Gottlob, who had seen it, afterwards assured his sister.

A little bell tinkled, and the thunder and lightning ceased; again was the bell heard, and the sea, the ship, the rock, and the forest all disappeared, leaving in their place the same large hall which they had first seen. Here were many persons talking, singing, drinking, and eating. They finally made way for the dancers, who came forward magnificently dressed. Sybil had often seen dancing, and had herself sometimes danced with her young companions. But she had never even imagined the possibility of such a dance as she then beheld. The dancers threw their limbs about in all directions, and flourished them exactly as a tambour major does his staff. They turned on one leg like a weathercock. While the tip of one foot touched the earth,

the other was pointed to the skies. They used their arms as if they had been the sails of a windmill; sometimes they leaped into the air, as if they had been moved by springs, then they fell back upon the ground; they stood by turns upon their head and their hands, making the most wonderful somersets; they danced first upon their heels, and then upon their toes; they leaped like wild horses, and flew round like crazy people, or as if they had been bitten by a tarantula; while the others looked on in silence, and the music accompanied them through all their gambols.

But as sometimes happens in public balls, the affair had an unfortunate end. In the midst of the gayety, a car of fire appeared, on which was seated the woman who had thrown herself into the water. She made a marvellously agile series of courtesies to the assembled multitude, and then commanded the spirits subject to her orders to set everything on fire; then began a real scene from the lower regions: sparks flew from

every corner, a rain of fire deluged all the persons assembled on the stage; but still, notwithstanding their melancholy and even frightful situation, they could not refrain from singing. They sang; while flying before the flames, they sang when a fiery pit opened and swallowed some of them down, and even when they were burned alive, and fell dead before the great opening, they still sang. The trumpets, the horns, the cornets, the drums and kettle-drums, made a terrible noise, while the spectators clapped their hands to express their enthusiasm, until the fall of the curtain put an end to the representation.

They then succeeded in extinguishing the conflagration, and a stifling smoke ascended as high as the gallery on which the children stood. The dead men rose gayly, shook each other by the hand, and finally departed in a most cheerful frame of mind. The spectators placed near Sybil also began to move, and went down the staircase. Gottlob and Sybil followed the crowd without knowing

exactly where they were going. All finally dispersed, and the two children met their father, who had awaited them at the entrance of the theatre.

"O how afraid I was, father!" cried Sybil; "at first I thought we should all be destroyed by the thunder; then I feared you would either be drowned by the water, or burned up by the fire. God be praised, we are at last all once more together; I am sure I never want to see such a thing again in all my life!"

"I knew it was only a play," said Gottlob; "although I too was afraid for a moment."

"I do not like this kind of farces," observed Sybil.

"And yet they are very ancient, and cost several thousands every year," said the rag-seller; "the lamp-lighter assured me so. The man and the woman who made such extravagant bounds, and who danced on the tips of their toes, received four hundred crowns for this evening alone!"

"Four hundred crowns for a quarter of an hour spent in such gambols!" cried Gottlob, astonished.

"I push my cart over hill and dale during four whole years for that sum," said Fingerling.

"And I," reckoned Gottlob, "should have been obliged to serve my master, the farmer, as a ploughboy, forty years, before I could have earned it."

"And my paper-manufacturer must sell one hundred and twenty thousand sheets of paper at a penny apiece."

"Dear father," cried Gottlob, "how many years must the plate be handed round in our church before we could collect one hundred and twenty thousand pennies?"

"You would become an old man while you were waiting," replied Fingerling.

"Take care!" suddenly cried a loud voice.

A brilliant light dazzled the bewildered eyes of our startled friends from Schellenberg. A horseman with a lighted torch



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It is not good to eat cherries with great Lords.

dashed past them at a full gallop. A mounted footman, glittering with gold lace, and also bearing a torch, followed him, and struck Sybil on her side, so that she fell to the ground, and Gottlob with her. A gilded carriage, drawn by six fiery horses, passed near Fingerling and the two children. The pavement trembled, and the honest country people knew not which way to turn.

"It is not good to eat cherries with great lords," said Fingerling, helping up the two children; — "not even behind the side scenes, or on the galleries." He then led Gottlob and Sybil, who were quite sleepy, to their inn, and rejoined his countryman, who had invited him to drink a bottle of wine.

"Have you any desire, Fingerling," said the court scullion, "to see the king eat, or the table set? Goldberg, the lackey, has promised to find us a good place, whence we can see everything without being seen ourselves. Ah! There we shall see a fine feast!"

"Thank you," said Fingerling, "I have seen

enough at the theatre; but does the king really eat again at this hour? Can he sleep on a full stomach? It must be at least ten o'clock!"

"They never sup at court before eleven," replied the scullion; "then they play cards, and pass the time in various ways until three or four in the morning; after that, their lordships retire to their rooms, where they remain until about ten o'clock."

"But that is turning the world upside down," said Fingerling; "making day of night, and night of day."

"So it is," replied the court scullion. "Night does not seem to be agreeable to many of these exalted personages, and so they try to turn it into day. As for sleep, they get that by drinking good wines. But, friend, I had almost forgotten that we were to drink a bottle of wine together. Let us empty it to the prosperity of our Schellenberg. Drink, my old friend, drink!"

The two friends then began to drink and

chat gayly. The wine was not of the best, but the rag-seller drank it with more pleasure than the most exquisite Cape wine could have afforded to the king. The juice of the grape rendered the two men very communicative.

"Your place must be very lucrative," said the rag-seller, emptying his glass.

"Hem!" said the court scullion, "my salary is only two crowns and a half per month."

"How!" cried Fingerling, astonished. "Did I understand aright? But I then make twice as much as you! How can you live on it?"

"I do as the others who live at the court; I steal."

"How?" said Fingerling, "you —"

"I steal!" replied his countryman, whose head the wine was beginning to warm. "The wine we are drinking, the bread I eat, the butter I put into my soup, the meat and vegetables served upon my table, and the wood I burn, are all stolen."

"Stolen!" cried the honest mountaineer,

all at once aroused to the full possession of his senses, and pushing his chair back to a considerable distance from his companion.

"We all steal," continued the court scullion, who was now in a mood for talking, "from the prime minister and favorite, down to the lowest scullion, like myself. Of all that appears on the royal table, one quarter has already been stolen. Another quarter is eaten, and the two remaining ones are again pilfered. All kinds of provisions, wine, pastry, rare fruits, candles, oil from the lamps, the wood from the chimneys, butter, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, everything belonging to the kitchens, disappears within the pockets of the courtiers; even the ladies carry off the bonbons for their children, or for their own eating.

"The king believes that his army consists of thirty thousand men, but he has really only seventeen thousand; the money necessary for the maintenance of the remaining thirteen thousand is appropriated by the minister;

not indeed entirely for his own use, as the generals, colonels, and captains take several millions; they do not perceive the deficit, and close their eyes to the immense gaps in their regiments. When the king bought the green diamond for so large a sum, the seller was probably forced to give at least forty thousand crowns to the minister, or he would not have counselled the king to purchase it. Every operation is thus conducted, even the buying of a pound of butter, for which the king always pays more than any one else."

"And how are they paid when there is a good place vacant, or some favor to be granted?"

"The Jews had formerly no cemetery in Dresden, and were forced to transport their dead to Toeplitz, a distance of fifteen leagues; but they gave the minister a thousand crowns, and soon had permission to bury their dead here. These sums are called *douceurs* when they are small, or received by persons of little consequence."

"*Douceur!* and what is that?" asked Fingerling.

"It is a kind of gift," replied the court scullion, "or a means of closing another person's eyes or ears. The court jester, Froelich, calls it an excellent method for silencing conscience. It is a French word, because it would sound too badly in English. Among us, he who gives the largest *douceur* obtains the desired place, whether he possesses the necessary qualifications or not. But you do not drink, my friend!"

"I am no longer thirsty," said the rag-seller, sighing, "since you have enlightened me. And besides, I must tell you that stolen wine, were it a thousand times better, revolts me."

"What simplicity!" said the other. "Another would certainly have stolen this bottle had not I done so."

"Even if that be so," replied Fingerling, "the receiver is no better than the thief, and he who knows of a robbery, and does not denounce it, has also but a small share of hon-

esty. Why, I ask you, does no one inform the king of all you have just told me?"

"Because he who would do so would lose his place immediately, and would be put in prison. The king would say, My Brühl* is an honest man; my Brühl does not deceive me; but you, you are a calumniator, who only wish to ruin him."

"Then write it to the king, if no one has the courage to tell it to him."

"Oh!" cried the court scullion, "the king receives no letter which has not been previously read by his minister; and besides, he would believe it as little written as spoken."

"I would not like to sleep under the same roof with the minister," said Fingerling, sighing.

"And why not?" replied the court scul-

* Henry, Count Brühl, the minister of Augustus III., might be called the Saxon Richelieu. But, through his ambition and love of luxury, he caused the ruin of his country. He died at Dresden on the 28th of October, 1763, leaving a memory abhorred by all the people.

lion; "his roof, his palace and garden, are the most beautiful in Dresden. Every one desires the honor of entering into his service, or of attending his festivals; each one aspires to be the object of his favors. He has two hundred servants, and there are hundreds of clocks and precious watches in his apartments, with quantities of clothes of all kinds. He never wears a pair of shoes but once, so that he has always twelve hundred pair made in advance. The state gives him a thousand crowns every week, without counting the hundred thousand —"

"Enough!" said Fingerling, hastily, to his countryman; "I pray you, say no more! The minister might have all the treasures in the world, but there would still be two things wanting to him, — a good conscience and the grace of God."

"He has the affection of his king, which is more precious in his eyes," replied the court scullion; "and there are many here who agree with Brühl."

Fingerling took his hat, and said: "Farewell, comrade, I thank you for your friendly reception; but I wish I had never come to Dresden. You have thrust a thorn in my side which I can never extract."

"But you are not going home so soon," said the friend. "To-morrow, at twelve o'clock, there will be a bear-fight at the castle. You may there see how your acquaintance, the bear from Augustusburg, will defend himself against the boars and hunting dogs which will be let loose against him."

"I am much obliged to you," said Fingerling, "but I have already seen and heard enough."

The honest man literally fled, exactly as the country rat in the fable did from his city friend.

"How fortunate for you that you were not with me!" said the rag-seller, gazing upon the two children, whom he found fast asleep. "It will be long before I can again sleep so soundly. Ah! Sodom and Gomorrah! do you

not fear lest your last hour should come upon you as a thief in the night?"

Fingerling sighed as he laid himself down to rest; but he could not close his eyes. "I would like to know if Brühl can sleep?" asked he of himself.

The rag-seller gradually fell asleep, amid the most tormenting dreams.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHEMISETTE.

THE two children rose the next morning, happy and contented. Fingerling, on the contrary, was very sad. He desired to return immediately to Schellenberg ; but his children begged him to remain a half-day longer, and he yielded to their request. He had no fancy for seeing the bear torn to pieces by the dogs and the boars, and he went with Gottlob, Sybil, and the scullion to the palace, that they might witness the departure of the king for his castle.

Other persons, having the same desire, had taken their places not far from the grand staircase. The fiery horses impatiently pawed the ground, and made the magnificent carriage rock like a cradle. Before and behind

were a crowd of lackeys, footmen, and other servants, awaiting the signal for departure. The steps were finally filled with noblemen glittering with gold and silver. They preceded the king, and were immediately followed by a personage whose coat was covered with decorations, and whom the rag-seller and his children took for the king himself; but he was only the favorite, the prime minister, the celebrated Count Brühl, as they were informed by the scullion. When the minister beheld the crowd in waiting, his face darkened, and, at a motion from his hand, the guard hastily forced the people back to a considerable distance, whence the king, who just then made his appearance, could only be indistinctly seen. The people retired murmuring, and Fingerling's neighbor said quite loudly: "Brühl has us forced back, lest any one of us should venture to speak the truth to the king. I should like to live long enough to see that fellow receive the punishment he so richly deserves!"

This incident was not calculated to improve Fingerling's ill-humor, and he resolved to hasten their departure as much as possible. He took leave of his countryman, and then advanced towards the court of the palace. But to his great astonishment, he was there arrested in his walk. Neither Fingerling nor his companion had observed, that, while they were employed in gazing with all their eyes, a woman passing by had stopped, and attentively examined Sybil's chemisette.

She had then spoken in a low voice to an official, who had given orders to the sentinel placed at the entrance to the palace, that he should not permit the rag-seller and his children to pass out.

This was done, and no notice taken of the questions put by the astonished countryman. Soon after, an under officer arrived, with three soldiers, the woman, and a servant. They surrounded Fingerling and his children, and examined the chemisette.

"I recognize this scutcheon perfectly," said

the woman, "and the embroidery too. My mistress carried this handkerchief when she was attacked by robbers and pillaged. How happy I should be if the guilty persons could be discovered and hanged! My poor mistress would be still living, if she had not then been so cruelly maltreated."

"I am a rag-seller," replied Fingerling, with the tranquillity of a good conscience. "I found this chemisette among some rags which I bought."

"We will see about that," replied the under officer; "meanwhile we must lock you up in some safe place."

The three mountaineers soon after found themselves behind a solid lock, and stout iron bars, which suffered but a feeble light to penetrate into the dark and damp prison.

Fingerling sighed, as he seated himself on a wooden bench attached to the wall, and said: "They who desire riches soon fall into temptation; they find many snares, and are led astray by foolish hopes. It was a desire

of this kind which brought me to Dresden, in the hope of receiving one florin more per hundred-weight for my rags; and a feeling of vanity also prompted my wife to put this chemisette in the child's bundle. "Do not weep, Gottlob," he continued, addressing the boy; "although accused, we are not the less innocent of the theft imputed to us, and we can thence patiently await God's decision with regard to our fate. Think of my poor little Augustine in the bears' den. Think of the poor bear himself, perhaps at this very moment groaning under the bites from the sharp teeth of the dogs and boars. Think of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, who sang even in prison. I would not exchange my lot for that of the powerful Count Brühl, were he twice as rich as he is!"

"Give me your hand, Sybil! What is the matter? You are as cold as ice." Fingerling looked at Sybil more attentively; she was as pale as a corpse, her eyes were fixed and lustreless, her lips were blue, and her whole

body trembled. "What is the matter, my child? Courage! courage! If a crime should come to light through this event, we may yet thank God, a good conscience is the best pillow."

But Sybil's conscience could find no rest, as we shall hereafter explain.

When the evening had come, the rag-seller said: "We might now be at Grillenburg if we had set out at noon. It would be much more pleasant in the beautiful forest, and in our dear town of Schellenberg, than here."

At these words Sybil burst into tears, and when the jailer brought some black bread and some water, she refused to touch them. Although Fingerling did not feel very hungry, he tasted this frugal repast, as well as Gottlob, who never was wanting in appetite. But that very evening, while Fingerling lay in his prison, the palace windows shone with the light of the wax candles, lively music was heard in the quiet street, where stood the

people gazing in silence upon the lofty windows. Many noble and wealthy men and women had on this evening arrayed themselves in purple, silk, and precious stuffs, adorned with golden embroideries, and fine stones. The king carried at least a million on his own person; each of his fingers, laden with rings, was worth ten thousand crowns, and yet he was most poor. He had not one sincere and faithful friend. He was surrounded by courtiers and flatterers. And one of the poorest among his subjects lay, not precisely before his door, but at a few steps from him, not exactly on the bare earth, but on the straw. His body was not diseased, but what is worse, he was sick at heart. The details of the depravity pervading the court had saddened the rag-seller, but had not entirely prevented his sleeping. He slept until towards midnight. He then awoke, and felt that hot drops were falling upon his hand. The full moon glimmered through the prison bars, and their gloomy shadows fell upon the floor,

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people gazing in silence upon the lofty windows. Many noble and wealthy men and women had on this evening arrayed themselves in purple, silk, and precious stuffs, adorned with golden embroideries, and fine stones. The king carried at least a million on his own person; each of his fingers, laden with rings, was worth ten thousand crowns, and yet he was most poor. He had not one sincere and faithful friend. He was surrounded by courtiers and flatterers. And one of the poorest among his subjects lay, not precisely before his door, but at a few steps from him, not exactly on the bare earth, but on the straw. His body was not diseased, but what is worse, he was sick at heart. The details of the depravity pervading the court had saddened the rag-seller, but had not entirely prevented his sleeping. He slept until towards midnight. He then awoke, and felt that hot drops were falling upon his hand. The full moon glimmered through the prison bars, and their gloomy shadows fell upon the floor,

body trembled. "What is the matter, my child? Courage! courage! If a crime should come to light through this event, we may yet thank God, a good conscience is the best pillow."

But Sybil's conscience could find no rest, as we shall hereafter explain.

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whereon knelt Sybil, weeping and sobbing like a penitent Magdalen.

"Why do you not sleep?" he asked, gently. "Am I not with you, as well as your brother, and a good and merciful God?"

"Pardon me, my father," said Sybil, crushed beneath the consciousness of having done wrong. "It is I who am the cause of your misfortune and ours. It was not my mother who put the chemisette in my bundle. I carried it away secretly. But I did not intend to steal it, I only meant to borrow it."

The startled rag-seller rose, and set up on his straw bed. "Unfortunate girl!" he exclaimed, in a melancholy tone of voice, "my words have been accomplished in a truly fatal manner. She who gives a single hair to the Devil is his for ever. Alas! alas!"

"Pardon me this time, father, and I will never do so again," cried Sybil.

"The Devil began by lying," said Fingerling, solemnly; "did you not promise the last time that you would never steal again?"

"But I have not stolen!" said Sybil, weeping bitterly.

"To take anything without the consent of the owner is to steal, and your own conscience tells you so; or it would have occasioned you no trouble and remorse. See how quietly your brother sleeps; happily for him, he is not groaning beneath the yoke of vice."

"Pardon me, father, pardon me!"

"Of what use will my pardon be to you, if that of your God be wanting? To him must your prayers be addressed."

Sybil said no more, but wept long in silence. Fingerling's soul was painfully oppressed. He thought upon the miseries which the theft of a comb, and the abstraction of a tattered chemisette, had brought upon the little thief. But the great robbers of whom his friend the scullion had spoken to him, were they not living amid abundance, honors, and pleasure, enjoying the respect and consideration of all around them?

The rag-seller forgot for a moment that

other world, where each one will be judged according to his deserts. He forgot too that the rich man spoken of in the Scriptures lived in pleasure and abundance until the end, and only met his punishment at the last hour.

The king himself had happily determined to discover and punish the brigands who had, two years before the present date, surprised the Countess of Stracoika, one of the queen's ladies of honor, and had stolen her ear-rings, and even cut off two of her fingers, not being able to carry away the rings fast enough. The Countess died in consequence of the ill treatment she had received, and no trace could be found of the miscreants. Thence were the usually dilatory proceedings of human justice somewhat hastened, and the interrogation of the rag-seller and his companions began at once. The rags sold to the paper-manufacturer were examined, but no other stolen articles were found among them.

The most minute examinations were also made in the house of the rag-seller at Schel-

lenberg, and his replies compared with those given by his wife. Fingerling and the two children, escorted by several soldiers, were transported in a wagon to Oederan, where the children were set at liberty, but not Fingerling, whose task was to find the woman from whom he said he had purchased the rags on which were the blood-stains. She had disappeared, and all efforts to find her were in vain. The owner of the house in which she had lived declared that the woman, who said her name was Steverin, had led a very retired life, that she had remained only about three months in the city, and that she had then departed, without telling where she was going.

Although the rag-seller had obtained the most satisfactory certificates of good conduct from the authorities in Schellenberg, he was still detained in custody.

Not until after Christmas had passed was he finally permitted to rejoin his family. He looked both thinner and older as he stood

among them. Great was their joy again to behold him, and he was almost smothered in their embraces; Sybil especially, feeling the gravity of her faults, showed an unaccustomed tenderness. She clasped his knees, weeping, and hiding her face. Fingerling tenderly embraced his wife and children, his care-worn features assumed a livelier aspect, but only for a moment. For had he not been robbed of three months of life? Had not his family been deprived of even the common necessities of existence during that period? Had he not been conducted, accompanied by guards, from the capital to Oederan, where even the children knew him, and all must look upon him as a thief?

How proud he had been of his honorable name? And who now would believe in the innocence of that Fingerling who had merely been released for want of proofs, and placed under the surveillance of the police? Honor is soon lost, but difficult to recover.

“Father!” said Gottlob, who had taken

Fingerling's place during his absence, and who had made several journeys through the country with the old barrow, "have you not brought back your cart? Where have you left it?"

"My cart?" replied Fingerling, sadly; "the police seized it to cover the expenses."

"And the money you received from the paper-manufacturer in Dresden?" continued Gottlob, anxiously.

"Gone too, to pay expenses," said the rag-seller, in a mournful tone of voice, at the same time turning his empty pockets inside out.

All threw a discouraged and pitying glance upon Sybil, whose eyes fell, and who began to weep bitterly. Alas! she had had many sad days during her uncle's captivity; she had received many a reproach from her brother and her adoptive mother, and had endured numberless privations. While Augustine ate her bread with childish gayety, she sadly watered hers with bitter tears.

Their state of want and poverty by no means ceased after Fingerling's return ; it rather increased with the additional mouth to feed, for a winter more severe than usual hindered the rag-seller from collecting his peculiar merchandise. All the roads were covered with a heavy snow, preventing the passage of his barrow, and he had no money to buy a sledge. He could only then, through the greatest efforts, carry small burdens upon his shoulders, and his gains did not suffice to buy even bread. All this was about a hundred years ago : there were then neither savings banks, nor so many societies of charitable ladies.

The rag-seller's family would have died of want had not some compassionate individuals come to their assistance : the burgomaster, the pastor, the collector, and the rich farmer at Rommelshain, with whom Gottlob had found a place, played the part of Providence to Fingerling in his distress.

About a month after the rag-seller had been

liberated, the monotony of Schellenberg was suddenly interrupted by a most singular and unexpected event. It was rumored throughout the country that a search had been made through the lonely dwelling of the bear-keeper, and that, among other suspicious objects, a woman had been found who was shut up for some unknown cause, and who was supposed to be the keeper's mother. No one, either in the castle or the town, knew the woman, and she had probably been secreted by the keeper in consequence of some crime.

No one could explain the cause of this descent of justice except the pastor, who, when he was called upon for his testimony with regard to the rag-seller's moral character, and the uprightness of his preceding life, had communicated to the magistrate the confidence reposed in him by the rag-seller with regard to the robbery of the oats committed by the keeper. He had perhaps excited the suspicion of others, and thence had arisen the search which had been instituted.

However, when he was questioned, Noack denied everything. He denied stealing the oats; he denied having acquired the objects found in his possession in an illegal manner; he also denied having maltreated his mother. With regard to her, he pretended that he had been forced to shut her up, as her mental condition was such as not to permit her to remain in contact with society at large.

The rag-seller, as well as Sybil, were several times confronted with the keeper, and the latter steadfastly denied being in any way connected with the disappearance of the cats and dogs.

When the keeper was examined, he was threatened with the rack to inspire him with a salutary fear, and a wound scarcely yet healed was found upon his left leg, which he said proceeded from a bite given him by one of his bears. It did not, however, seem deep enough to have been caused by either the teeth or the claws of so formidable an animal.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

THE keeper's denials retarded the progress of the criminal process, and the circumstance of his mother's illness rendered every interrogatory impossible. However, after a few days, during which the old woman was well cared for, and nourished with food calculated to revive her failing strength, she was in a condition to speak with more clearness, although still in incoherent phrases. The inquiry was again prosecuted.

The old woman declared that her son, the keeper of the bears, on his last journey home from Dresden, had passed through Oederan, where she then lived, with one of his animals, which had recently been employed in

a combat in the capital. He had proposed to her to accompany him to Augustusburg, where he could take better care of her, and more easily supply her wants. He had however insisted as a condition, that she should join him outside the walls of the city, speak to him as if he were a stranger, and ask him for a seat in his wagon. The affair was thus managed: the strange driver did not recognize her, and at the nearest village preceding Augustusburg, she left the vehicle, and went on foot to her son's lonely dwelling.

The latter, however, had not kept his promise. He became intoxicated nearly every day, reviled her, maltreated her, and even shut her up when she threatened to denounce him to justice. She had suffered from cold, and from the want of the most indispensable necessities, during her incarceration; but no one had heard her cries or complaints, and she was daily awaiting her last hour.

The circumstances of the keeper's mother having lived at Oederan, of her having left

the place in so extraordinary a manner, and the fact of her having dwelt there under a feigned name, induced the judge to ask her if, during the preceding July, she had not sold to a rag-man a bundle of rags, among which were some bloody linen, and the half of an embroidered handkerchief.

This unexpected question visibly embarrassed the old woman; however, she recovered sooner than might have been expected from her age and weakness. Her face assumed an expression of idiocy, and she replied, with a feigned silliness: "Rags? blood-stains? embroideries? No! no! I once heard the rag-seller whistle, about twenty years ago. My son Noack had not then shut me up. Then the rag-man piped well, and I could hear him perfectly; but now I could hear him no longer, the cold has destroyed my hearing."

The judge gave orders to introduce the keeper of the bears; he told him of his mother's deposition, and asked him why he had

forbid her recognizing him as her son during the journey from Oederan to Augustusburg. Noack replied, that this fact existed solely in his mother's imagination.

The rag-seller was then sent for, and the judge said to him: "My good man, you may perhaps have the pipe about you with which you are accustomed to announce your presence in the streets. This old woman does not think she can hear the sound of it. Try your skill a little."

While Fingerling was searching his pockets for his pipe, he threw a glance towards the old woman, who endeavored to shun his gaze. "It is she!" cried the rag-seller; "that is the woman who sold me the rags spotted with blood, and the embroidered handkerchief. I recognize her by the wart on the left side of her nose."

Astounded by this declaration, the woman fell senseless upon the floor; her son, instead of aiding her, stood motionless; but the muscles of his face contracted, his eyes

rolled in their sockets, he ground his teeth, and clenched his fists.

"Guard," said the judge quietly, "throw some water on this woman's head, and rub her temples."

When the guard approached the old woman with the pitcher of water, the keeper uttered a hollow groan, or rather a deep growl; then, as if some one were claspings his throat, and he longed for air to breathe more freely, he threw his coat and vest open with a desperate movement, tore off his cravat, and cried, in a strange and hissing tone of voice: "Take away the water! Take away the water!" His face grew pale as death, and he trembled in every limb.

"You may pretend as much as you please," said the judge, "you cannot deceive me. Guard," he continued, "perhaps, if you were to empty your pitcher over his head, you might cure him of his malady."

The guard drew back in terror, when, while approaching Noack, the latter endeavored to bite his hand as if he had been a dog.

The miserable creature was seized with a second attack of hydrophobia, more violent than the first. A white foam, which nearly stifled him, gathered about his lips; and he uttered frightful sounds, like the hoarse barking of a dog, or the howling of a wolf. Every one drew back in terror and dismay. Noack, finding no one in his vicinity on whom to vent his rage, bit several times through the heavy trimming on his coat-sleeves, after which he became somewhat more tranquil, and extreme weakness was expressed in the quivering lines about his face; he soon seemed to lose all command of his limbs, and the strong man tottered, unable to stand erect.

Such a condition could not be feigned, as soon became apparent to the judge, and all the by-standers. After a long silence, during which astonished glances alone expressed the feeling pervading the assembly, the judge spoke in a voice filled with awe, and even pity: "You may go now, if you feel strong enough."

He then gave instructions in a low voice to the provost and the police officer. Both took their staves, which were much longer then than those now in use. Some preceded the prisoner, others followed him, and all kept at a distance, lest they might be exposed to his bites.

After the keeper had departed, the judge said solemnly to the old woman and the bystanders: "The Supreme Judge seems to have himself conducted this affair, and to be about to punish the guilty one; I then, in all humility, retire for a season. As for you," he continued, speaking in a severe manner to Noack's mother, "I will talk to you frankly, and without circumlocution. You have already one foot in the grave; your son, a criminal, is even nearer his last end than yourself. Confess then while you still live, that you may have some hope of escaping at least from Divine justice. You see through your son, that God knows how to find him who disregards his laws. Denials are of no use, for God lays open at his own time, and in his

own way, the deepest and most hidden secrets."

The old woman was confounded, and acknowledged that it was truly she who had sold the blood-stained rags. She confessed that she had received them from her son, and that she was cognizant of the greater part of his robberies. One of his accomplices lived at the castle, and was the castellan's coachman.

The judge immediately sent persons to seize the person of the accomplice; but they returned with the news that the coachman, having had some fears with regard to the termination of this examination, had departed before their arrival, carrying off with him his master's horses.

The judge gave orders that the fugitive should be pursued, and then sent for the physician. He ordered all the articles which Noack had touched to be taken away or well cleaned, and recommended prudence to all the by-standers.

Noack had been taken back to his prison,

and continued very quiet. Seated in one corner, he gazed mournfully but quietly about him, while a kind of iron cage, resembling that of his bears, was placed around him, and he was thus rendered harmless to all who were obliged to remain in the prison.

When, later, the judge, accompanied by the physician and several other persons, entered the cell, Noack gave no signs of attention until he had been called several times. He trembled, and began to weep piteously. This sudden change in a man apparently so hardened was extraordinary, and could only be explained through his condition.

"Noack!" cried the physician in a loud voice to the prisoner, who was listening without apparently heeding, "tell me, does your wound proceed from the bite of a dog?"

The keeper looked at the physician with a stupefied air, and replied: "Yes, sir, from a dog."

"Did you know the dog, and is he still living?" continued the doctor.

"He is dead; pardon me, but I killed him because he bit me. I could not otherwise defend myself; he was a wicked beast; ask his master, the rag-man. He was as black and as bad as the Devil."

"How long ago is it?" asked the physician.

"Very long. My head turns; I feel very ill. It was then very warm."

"What did you do with the body of the dog?"

"I threw it to my bears, but they would not touch it; I then buried it."

"Why did you not show your wound to a physician?" again asked the doctor.

"I did not think it of sufficient importance," replied Noack, "and it soon healed. It is only since the thaw that it has reopened and hurts me; ah! how it burns!"

"Noack!" said the judge, "you have begun well; and now confess the truth with regard to the other charges; acknowledge the share you had in the robbery of the Polish Countess."

The keeper continued to shed tears, and said: "On this point I am innocent as a child, I never saw the lady in all my life"

"This miserable man still continues his denials, even on the brink of the tomb," said the judge indignantly to the by-standers. "Your falsehoods can no longer benefit you," he continued, addressing himself to Noack; "the castellan's coachman has confessed everything."

"The coachman!" cried the prisoner terrified; "yes, indeed, he is truly a dangerous person, much more so than I. He often tried to persuade me to steal the rich vessels from the chapel, and he even once endeavored to force the lock, as he himself confessed to me; but I always resisted. As ——"

Noack could not finish, for the physician suddenly produced a glass of water which he had kept concealed, and put it to the keeper's lips. At this sight, the paroxysms recommenced with redoubled force. The bars of the cage were happily solid enough to

prevent the rabid man from falling upon the by-standers, who kept at a considerable distance. Even the physician could not help partaking in the horror which seized upon the spectators.

"It is only too apparent," said he, when Noack fell back exhausted upon the straw, "that this wretched man is stricken with hydrophobia; every attempt at cure would be useless, and we must only be careful, and keep the prisoner from all contact with his kind, for fear of some mishap."

The necessary measures were taken. Two sentinels, who were charged to fire upon the rabid man should he succeed in escaping from his cell, were placed at the door. The unfortunate wretch continued in this way during three days, tortured by the most fearful agonies, now filling the air with his cries of despair, and now shaking his prison bars with all the fury of a madman. He then confessed the robbery of the Polish Countess, and several other crimes he had committed.



Noack shook his prison bars with all the fury of a
madman.

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The pastor offered him the last aids of religion, and prayed with him during his lucid moments.

When he was dead, his body was seized by huge iron pincers, and placed in the grave which had been dug for it. The prison was well cleaned, and washed with lime.

The mother soon followed her son, even before she could be transferred to the house of detention.

Noack's accomplice was finally arrested, and expiated his crimes on the scaffold, according to the laws of his country.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SERMON.

THE remembrance of the judgment of God, which had been manifested in so extraordinary a manner upon the keeper and his mother, long remained most vividly in the minds of the good people of Schellenberg. Fingerling's innocence had been triumphantly established, and he continued an object of universal commiseration on account of the unjust imprisonment to which he had been subjected.

"My dear Fingerling," said the Burgo-master one day friendly to the rag-seller, "how is it with you? Have you recovered your old cheerfulness? I think not."

"Why?"

"That is what I ask of you. Has not God visibly protected you? Suppose your mad dog had bitten you, or one of your family! Was it not fortunate that the keeper stole him just when he had become dangerous? It is true you have passed several months in prison. But you would not have fared much better at home. And then remember that the judge has demanded an indemnity for you. That will be more than a crown for every day passed in prison. That will amount to a pretty sum, with which you can buy a new cart, another Phylax, and many other useful things. Is not your honor restored, and your reputation more solid than ever? Why then do you always look so sad?"

"Most assuredly," replied Fingerling, "I have thanked the Lord for his protection and mercies, and I will continue to thank him during my whole life. You ask me why I am no longer so gay as I used to be? Hem! I think I may trust you with

the reason: I wish I had never taken my rags to Dresden, for what I saw and heard there has left a very bad impression on my mind, and placed a thorn in my side which I cannot draw out. You see, Burgomaster, if only the half of what the court scullion told me is true, that city is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah; and if God would show his justice as he did upon the bear-keeper, hundreds of persons must go mad. Every time I think of this, I feel sad, and strive in vain to recover my gayety."

"Go to the pastor," counselled the Burgomaster, "and he will find some cure for your mind and heart."

As Noack, the keeper, had said, the thaw had come. The south wind melted the deep snow, and the earth eagerly absorbed the moisture. What all the inhabitants of the Erzgebirge could not have done in many months, perhaps years, was accomplished in a few days by the all-powerful breath of a mighty God. The earth lost its winter gar-

ment, and men's hearts beat more lightly and joyously as the spring approached. Have you ever, my dear reader, experienced the feeling of delight which fills the heart at the close of a long winter? While the fine days in autumn sadden us by their lessons of the rapid flight of time, spring inspires us with joy and hope.

It was Sunday. The sun shed his beneficent rays through the clear, blue sky, and the birds sang gayly in the groves surrounding the little town. The bells sounded even more pleasantly than in winter, and did not summon the faithful in vain. Only those who were inevitably prevented from leaving their homes, were absent from the house of God. Fingerling, accompanied by Sybil, was among the rest. His wife remained at home with Augustine, that she might nurse the young infant of a sick neighbor. Fingerling's heart was on that day more accessible than usual to the word of God, as explained by the eloquent pastor. The sermon was upon the

parable of the tares growing amid the wheat. He showed his hearers, that in the days of our Lord Jesus Christ there were many wicked men, tares, among the good, the wheat; and that the first had not immediately felt the justice and chastisements of God. We must acknowledge, he said, that in our time the number of the wicked has not decreased; but let them not deceive themselves, for when the reaper shall come, Death, with his pitiless scythe, the tares shall be bound into bundles, and thrown into eternal fire, and the wheat gathered into the barns, heaven, with all its delights. All the woes of our mundane existence cannot be compared with the glories of heaven; sometimes Divine Justice is displayed in a wonderful manner even upon this earth, as has been seen in the miserable end of the keeper of the bears; but God more frequently punishes or rewards men only after their death, as Christ has shown in the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus. The parable says, that what a man sows, that he

shall reap. Who sows with the flesh, shall reap with the flesh; but who sows in the spirit, shall reap life eternal; and this is always true.

No one among all the auditors was more moved and consoled than Fingerling. He could not refrain from communicating his joy to one of his neighbors.

"It is exactly," said he, "as if the pastor had heard the conversation I recently held with the burgomaster; for his whole sermon was filled with allusions to the points we discussed. He has consoled me much. All my painful impressions, all the thorns rankling in my heart, have disappeared. Ah! I wish I were that poor Lazarus, so that angels might one day bear me to Abraham's bosom!"

This wish was to be granted upon that very day.

The Collector Groessel, and his wife, had not gone to church. They expected more company than usual at their inn, and had

remained at home to make the necessary preparations. Augustus, following his parents' example, had also absented himself from the morning service. He arranged the chairs in the sitting-room, wiped the tables, and placed fresh sawdust in the spit-boxes. His mother prepared a considerable number of bottles of wine, and counted her provision of rolls, sausages, smoked meat, and pork, designed to satisfy the keen appetite of the drinkers. As for the collector, he was busy in reconciling two enemies, in uniting two antipodes; in other words, he was mixing sour and sweet wine together in the same bottle, when he was suddenly interrupted in his occupation by a piercing cry from his son.

Impelled by the same feeling, both father and mother left the hall, and ran to the front room, where they found their son screaming at the top of his lungs, and pointing to the window, before which they indeed perceived an object which justified Augustus's terror, and occasioned the parents no less anxiety.

A great brown bear stood in the street, erect upon his hind legs, and playing with the sign we have already described. He seemed to find much pleasure in turning the garland with the bottle and glass round and round, and executed all sorts of gymnastics, with the agility of a monkey.

"God help us!" cried the collector's wife, wringing her hands in terror; she then ran into an adjoining chamber, where the maid was busied in dressing the two youngest children. She carried them with her into the upper story of the house, and told her son and husband to follow her after they had carefully fastened the door.

But the courageous man did not obey. The citizen was formerly, and with good reason, the natural defender of the house in which he dwelt. To keep themselves in practice, the townspeople organized companies of target-shooters, and the collector, a zealous partisan of this species of exercise, possessed a good gun, with a stock of pow-

der and balls. If he followed his wife at that moment into the upper story, it was to look for his weapon. He put in a good charge of powder, to which he added two balls, and then said to his wife: "There can never be a better chance to shoot a bear. He is only ten feet from the house. These two balls once fairly lodged in his breast, he would soon breathe his last." •

He raised his loaded gun, but his wife caught him by the arm. "For God's sake," she cried, "do not fire. You might miss, the bear might move. If you only succeeded in wounding him, you would be lost, with your wife, your children, and all of us. Have you forgotten how many balls it took to kill the bear last year? Remember, that when a wounded bear falls upon his aggressors, nothing can save the victim, if no one be at hand to destroy the animal!"

His wife's prayers would not have sufficed to prevent the execution of his project, had he not heard his children, who were looking



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Do not fire ! cried the Collector's wife.

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from one of the upper windows, crying out: "The people are coming out of church!"

The collector and his wife gazed out of the window, undecided what to do. The children and the maid set up a loud cry to warn the approaching crowd. They, perceiving the bear, fell back, and uttered such piercing cries that the bear was startled, and quitting his plaything, the sign, he turned, and, standing on his hind paws, fixed his great eyes in wonder on the multitude.

"Do not shoot!" again began the collector's wife. "You see that the bear is afraid. His companion did no harm last year to Augustine. This one may do the same. If the people will only remain together, they may keep the bear in awe."

"I can see distinctly that his mouth is red with blood," replied the husband, "and there are blood-stains upon his shaggy coat."

The woman was about to reply; but she uttered a sudden cry of horror. She hid her face, and turned away from the window.

The collector grew pale, and, striking the butt of his gun upon the floor, said, angrily : " If I had not listened to the woman, if I had only fired — "

Fingerling and his adopted daughter were also among the crowd, and he felt more anxiety than the others for the safety of his dear ones.

" My house is the nearest to the bears' den," cried he, " and it was my child who fell last year into the bear-trap. What may not have happened at home ? I can stay no longer ; Sybil, stay here with the others. As for me, I will run home."

" Stay, father, stay!" said Sybil.

" Stay, Fingerling!" cried several voices.

But the rag-seller was already at a considerable distance from the crowd. As he started, he said : " Let us see if the bear can catch me!"

He ran towards his house. The bear followed him. " Man should not tempt the gods," said the ancients.

Fingerling was known to be one of the best runners in the neighborhood, and he at first justified his reputation. He left the bear far behind him. But it sometimes happens that, in running, a sharp pain seizes upon the foot, and for a moment paralyzes it. Thus did it happen with the rag-seller. All at once he made a misstep, and lost the use of his feet. In one moment the bear was upon him; the creature threw him upon the pavement, and buried his long teeth and sharp claws in the back, the neck, and the head of the unfortunate man. The crowd was stupefied with terror, their hair stood on end, and their eyes were filled with tears. No one moved to succor the rag-seller, whose cries filled the air. The cries were soon changed into groans, and the terrified crowd dispersed on all sides, abandoning the poor man to a bloody death.

Fingerling saved his companions' lives, who during his tortures had time to place themselves out of the reach of danger.

Fingerling ceased to move ; his lips uttered no sound ; the bear left him, and ran through the deserted streets seeking fresh prey. But the doors were again soon opened, and men armed with guns, sabres, pikes, pitchforks, flails, and clubs, issued forth. The little band momentarily increased. The blacksmith, a man of colossal proportions, accompanied by his workmen, joined them. He carried a great iron bar, and the others, large hammers.

" Let us avenge the poor rag-seller," cried the Cyclop, in his powerful voice. " Let us kill this ferocious animal. Down with the royal plaything, which destroys our fellow-citizens, our wives, and our children ! Down with the bears of Augustusburg ! Poland was always a curse to Saxony. She swallows up all our Saxon money, and only gives us in return some good-for-nothing beasts. Forward, my friends ! "

The bear was soon crippled under a shower of blows, and no longer in a condition to hurt any one. They afterwards found that

the beast had succeeded in leaving his den by means of a snow-drift, which the frost had rendered solid; he had gone towards the town, where he had entered Fingerling's house through an open window. Augustine was seated by the cradle, in which the infant was sleeping, and Mrs. Fingerling was occupied in the kitchen, preparing the dinner. The mother's terror may be imagined when, attracted by Augustine's cries, she perceived the monster seated by the cradle, licking the baby's head with his long red tongue. Her sudden approach soon directed upon herself the murderous appetite of the bear. Her agony, happily, was not long, the ferocious animal having commenced with the head and throat. He then fled without harming the children, and we find him again playing with the sign before the inn.

The unfortunate Fingerling was conveyed to his dwelling; he still breathed, though faintly and painfully; but the surgeon declared that nothing could be done for him,

every attempt only increasing the agony of the dying man.

Fingerling's room could not contain the sympathizing crowd, who awaited his last breath.

After some time he opened his closed lids, and asked with considerable effort: "Where is my dear wife?"

Those nearest to him silently pointed towards a blood-stained cloth, beneath which reposed the disfigured corpse of Mrs. Fingerling. The rag-seller comprehended at once.

"My fears were only too well founded!" he said, in a feeble voice. "A moment, and we shall be again united; I saw that in a dream. How beautiful it was! We were together in Paradise. But where is my child?"

Augustine, who had hidden her face upon the side of her father's dying bed, raised her head, and turned her swollen eyes towards her father. Fingerling gazed tenderly upon his child, and made a vain effort to lay his

hand upon her head. He finally said: "God bless thee, my dear child!"

Fingerling's dying look then turned towards Sybil, who stood by Augustine's side. He gazed upon her with an imploring expression, saying: "Be always honest."

These last words, spoken in quite a loud tone of voice by the rag-seller, produced a profound impression upon the minds of all present, especially upon Sybil's; she never forgot during her whole life the counsel given at that last and solemn moment.

Fingerling's head had fallen with the last word which he had uttered; he was dead. Some hours later, his features, which had been distorted by pain, assumed a smiling aspect, — a circumstance which has not unfrequently been observed with other corpses.

Gottlob, Sybil, and Augustine followed the bier on which were borne the remains of this unfortunate couple; they were accompanied by an immense crowd.

The three orphans were adopted by the

town of Schellenberg; the inhabitants, by voluntary donations, contributed a sum large enough to secure them against want, and to procure for them food, clothes, a shelter, and even education. Augustine found a second father in the burgomaster, and Sybil in the collector. Gottlob, under the direction of the farmer of Rommelshain, became an accomplished agriculturist, and some years later, Sybil, who had never forgotten the lesson she had received, went to live with her brother and superintend his household.

The indemnity for the unjust imprisonment of Fingerling also finally arrived, thanks to the measures taken by the judge; it amounted to about a hundred crowns, which were put out at interest, and increased to quite a considerable sum. This of course belonged to Augustine, and formed a handsome dowry, when she, having grown into a charming young girl, bestowed her hand upon an honest citizen of Schellenberg.

The inhabitants of the town united in a

petition that no more bears should be kept in the ill-guarded den at Augustusburg. It is probable that this petition would have been disregarded, had the king ever received it. If, in fact, no more bears were kept in the den, the reason must be sought in the seven years' war, which soon after broke out, and furnished less diverting occupations to the king and his favorites.

The magnificent castle of Augustusburg is still in existence, as well as the bears' den; but the latter is no longer used as a dwelling for such savage beasts, being now filled with vegetables and fruit-trees.

The green diamond, that costly ornament, is still shown to the curious visiting the palace in Dresden; these shining stones are looked upon with more wonder for their value than for their beauty, and they are regarded as the useless remnants of a melancholy era.

Since the death of Augustus III., the kings of Saxony have found more pleasure in gazing upon rich fields and green pastures,

than upon diamonds of that color; they prefer the happiness of their people to expensive amusements, and to bear-fights. We owe it to the zeal of these monarchs, that the wounds made by their predecessors have been closed, and entirely healed, happily for them and for us.

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

AGNES FRANZ.



BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

BERTRAND, the eldest son of Renaud du Guesclin, a French nobleman living at the Chateau de la Motte Broon, was the most self-willed, the wildest, and most ungovernable boy in the whole neighborhood. Neither his mother nor his tutor could do anything with his stubborn temper; and his father, who might perhaps have possessed some power over him, was unfortunately so repelled by his son's rude manners and unprepossessing exterior, that he rarely permitted him to come into his presence, and gave up all hope of rendering him a useful member of society.

Nature seemed certainly to have neglected the child's appearance in a most extraordinary manner. His little and unattractive

person bore a head so large, that it was out of all proportion to the rest of his figure. His eyes were small and deep-set, and flashed lightning from beneath his overhanging forehead and bushy hair; the expression of his whole countenance was so haughty and tyrannical, that all the children in the castle of La Motte Broon ran away screaming whenever the wild Bertrand made his appearance, even in the distance.

But his naughty and disagreeable ways disfigured the young Du Guesclin much more than his personal exterior. His clothes were always torn and dirty, his hair uncombed, and his face scratched. He quarrelled daily with his brother and sister, and with the servants in the house. He stormed and raged when any one opposed his will, and was so bold and ill-bred at the table, that his father frequently commanded him to leave it.

During school hours, he showed the same self-will and obstinacy; although he was undoubtedly endowed with excellent capacities

for learning, he did not make the least progress, and every day received fresh reprimands. The increasing contempt which Bertrand's father showed towards him rendered his disposition ever gloomier and more impracticable; he saw that all hope of his improvement had been abandoned, that every one fled from him, and, losing all confidence in his own better nature, all love for those around him seemed to vanish from his soul. He was thus on the broad road to destruction, and would have become a stern, hard man, an enemy to all his race, if God had not sent, just at the right moment, a saving angel to deliver the poor boy from the evils with which he was threatened through the distortion of his own natural character.

One day Bertrand was playing with his younger brother and sister in the dining-room of the castle. His sister Mary and her little brother stood trembling in one corner of the hall, while Bertrand approached them with a

dark look, and every now and then raised his whip with a threatening gesture.

"Well, have you decided?" cried the child, in a commanding tone. "Have you thought better of it; and will it please you now, Miss, to take this bit in your mouth, and be my horse?"

"Ah, Bertrand!" begged the frightened girl, "do choose some other play. You are so wild, and always will beat me with your whip!"

"But you shall do it!" cried Bertrand. "In the absence of the Lord Renaud du Guesclin, I am your lord and master. I command this play!"

"And we, we will not play it!" replied the little ones, making common cause in opposition to their rude brother.

"How, you dare to disobey me?" cried Bertrand, striking the poor little Mary so heavily across the shoulders with his whip, that the child began to weep aloud.

"You had better be quiet, I tell you!"

threatened Bertrand ; but her screams had already been heard in the adjoining room.

Bertrand's tutor suddenly appeared in the hall, and began, as soon as he had made himself acquainted with the cause of disturbance, to remonstrate with the young tyrant. It seemed as if Bertrand had not previously understood the impropriety of his behavior in threatening and maltreating one weaker than himself. He had frequently, upon other occasions, been his little sister's defender, and silently repented of his ignoble action ; but as the Abbé continued, in the most humiliating words, to place before him a picture of his daily misdeeds, it seemed as if every syllable only hardened his heart, and the most stolid indifference finally replaced the gleam of good feeling which had been excited in his soul.

" Yes, your father is right," said the Abbé, finally, " when he declares it would have been better to have had no son than such a one as you, whose laziness, wickedness, and diso-

bedience are a disgrace to the name of his family, and who will never be worthy to be placed in the rank of his renowned ancestors!"

"Did my father say that?" asked Bertrand, making a wild gesture. His face glowed, fire flashed from his eyes, while his hands were tightly clenched.

"Very well," he cried, gnashing his teeth, "I will grow every day more wicked, more lazy, and more intolerable! I here renounce obedience to you, and to all the rest of the world! No! I will obey no one, and love no one! Every one shall hate me, and I will hate every one! That is but just, for then will all my father's hopes be fulfilled!"

The Abbé gazed in dumb horror upon the raging boy. His face was stamped with the impress of the most passionate emotion, and his whole frame trembled.

"Did you understand, Mr. Abbé," he continued. "I no longer need a tutor!" He accompanied these words with a haughty gesture of dismissal.

"You are right!" replied the Abbé: "it is better we should part, than that I should continue to cultivate a soil on which no good seed can possibly take root. I will tender my resignation to your mother immediately. God be ever with you, poor, unhappy boy, and show you betimes the abyss to which such dispositions must inevitably lead you!"

A few hours after this occurrence, the whole family were assembled in the dining-hall. Madame du Guesclin appeared with her little ones, her face pale and sorrowful, and her eyes dim with weeping. The lord of the castle was absent. Bertrand, who came in last, sat at the end of the table in gloomy and haughty silence.

"Your tutor, our good Abbé, has left us!" said Madame du Guesclin to Bertrand, at the same time forgetting to fill his soup-plate. The servant who stood behind him, and who was accustomed to see his misdeeds punished in

this way, took the plate, knife and fork, away from before him ; — this was also unobserved by the mother, and she continued : “ I have until now endeavored to dissuade your father from his design of sending you away from us to some institution for education ; but I see now that only strong measures will answer. We must then part, my son, however painful it may be to my heart ! Your own behavior has this day called forth this unalterable resolution.”

While the lady, her voice filled with emotion, and her eyes with tears, spoke these words, which Bertrand had scarcely heard, and to which he paid no heed, the boy had drawn a dish towards him, on which was a pair of fowls, and began to help himself.

“ What are you doing ? ” cried Madame du Guesclin.

“ I am taking what belongs to me ! ” answered Bertrand, in an indifferent tone, at the same moment beginning to tear the chicken to pieces with his hands.

Madame du Guesclin now for the first time perceived that she had forgotten him. "Cut him a piece of meat!" said she to a servant; and then, throwing a warning look upon Bertrand, she added: "I hope that in future you will learn to wait!"

She had scarcely spoken these words, when the furious boy thrust his right hand into a pastry, and his left into the salad bowl, and so on, without in the least heeding his mother's looks, until he had taken of every dish he desired, and had greedily devoured his prey.

"Get up, Bertrand, you have eaten enough!" commanded the outraged mother.

"I will sit at the table as long as I please," replied the boy, with a flaming glance.

"Out with you, this moment!" cried the lady, making a sign to a servant to seize upon the young rebel.

Bertrand well understood this sign. He grasped a knife from the table, and cried: "If any one dares to touch me, I will run this knife through his body."

"Horrible!" groaned Madame du Guesclin, rising from the table. But the servant had already quietly disarmed the child, and carried him away with his chair. Boiling with rage, Bertrand sprang from him, flew to the table, threw plates and glasses in every direction, and broke everything which came within his reach. Meat, fruit, salad, everything upon the table, was thrown upon the floor. The younger children flew to their mother's arms with loud screams, while she, benumbed with horror, could scarcely utter a single word.

"Great God!" she finally cried, "can it be possible that I am the mother of that boy,—of a boy who heeds neither the laws of God, nor those of men; who scorns his own mother, and recklessly draws down the wrath of Heaven upon his head!"

Bertrand, in the excess of his passion, did not hear these words, and continued to rage in the most furious manner. He shrieked and raved like a madman, trod under foot all upon which he could lay his hands, and

then, loudly laughing, seemed to find a wild pleasure in the destruction around him.

"Hold him fast!" said Madame du Guesclin to the servants, whom the unusual sounds had brought to the spot. "Take him away, but not to his room, no, down into the cellar! Shut him up in the vault under the steps! He shall remain there until his father's return, and eat nothing but dry bread, with a little water!"

Mary and her baby brother raised their tender voices to beg pardon for Bertrand, while the latter, barricaded in a distant corner, awaited with fiercely gleaming eyes the end of this scene.

A knocking was suddenly heard at the door, and a lady of noble mien entered, wearing the black dress of a nun. She looked startled when she saw the fragments strewn the floor, and stood motionless upon the threshold of the door.

"Sister Martha!" cried the little ones,

springing from their mother's arms, and flying to meet the new comer.

"You come at a most unhappy hour!" said Madame du Guesclin, offering her hand to the nun.

"But I hope not at an unwelcome one!" replied the latter.

Madame du Guesclin looked up towards heaven, and cried: "Ah! if I ever stood in need of consolation, it is at this very moment!"

The nun started, and anxiously inquired for the lady's husband, fearing lest she should hear some ill news of him. But the heart-stricken mother only shook her head mournfully.

"Now? ——" said the nun, while her eyes wandered through the room, and were finally fixed upon a single point.

"You are horrified at this disorder!" remarked Madame du Guesclin. "Ah! you would be much more horrified, if you only knew the cause!"

"My attention was attracted by another object!" replied the nun. "Who is that boy?" she added, pointing towards Bertrand, who with glowing visage and downcast eyes, a picture of shame and confusion, strove to hide himself from her gaze.

Madame du Guesclin sighed as she looked upon the ground, and the servants receiving no further orders, silently left the room with the remainder of the dinner.

"That boy?" repeated the lady, sorrowfully. "Alas, he is a wicked and ungovernable child!"

"How?" said the nun, approaching Bertrand with a smiling mien, "can one be already wicked at so early an age?"

"As well as at yours!" replied Bertrand, contracting his brows.

"But it would be better if it were not so," said the nun gently. "Come nearer, and leave your corner, my little friend."

"I am a friend to no one!" said Bertrand, with a dark look; "you need not trouble

yourself to read me a lesson in morals! I hear enough of it from mother, father, and tutor!’

“O no,” replied the nun, “I was not thinking of reading you a lesson; I am sure you do not need one, because your own disposition will lead you to be reasonable and obedient.”

“I would have you to know, noble lady,” answered Bertrand, proudly rising, “that no one shall laugh at me with impunity!”

So saying, he seized a stick of wood, and flourished it round his head in an angry and threatening manner.

“I beseech you, come away from him!” begged Madame du Guesclin, “he may indeed do you some injury!”

“O no, I cannot believe that of him!” said the nun, stepping nearer to the boy. As she stood immediately before him, she stroked back the disordered locks from his brow and cheeks, and continued: “There is something very noble and characteristic in the features

of this child. He is born to fill a remarkable destiny! His physiognomy promises greatness and success. This boy will surely be a great general, and one of the most distinguished men of his day."

"Ah!" sighed Madame du Guesclin, as she listened to this prophecy, "my unhappy son seems, alas! intended for no such brilliant destiny!"

"What! This boy is your son?" cried the astonished nun; "and you have kept him so long hidden? How often have I not been with you, and yet this is the first time I ever saw him!"

"His unfortunate disposition forced us to keep him hidden from all human eyes!" sighed the poor mother. "He is our eldest son; but his behavior is such, that we only look upon him with deep shame, and can never venture to let him make his appearance in the castle when our friends are with us. He has drawn this state of banishment upon himself, through his evil behavior, and his obstinate disregard

of a" good manners. And as the rudeness of his character increases daily, we can only fear that he will never cause his family anything but shame and sorrow!"

Madame du Guesclin then related the occurrences of the last few hours, and painted the whole scene in the most vivid and truthful colors. When she had ended her narration, the nun, who had listened most attentively and sympathizingly, turned to Bertrand, who, ashamed and confused, did not venture to lift his eyes from the floor, and said in a most gentle tone and manner:

"You have done very wrong, my child, and I am quite sure that you see this as well I do! I acknowledge that power and mastery over others is very tempting and alluring, but we must begin by first conquering our own passions and inclinations. If we are threatened with punishment, it is quite natural that we should struggle against it; it is far better not to have deserved it, and most noble to submit, if we unfortunately have done so.

Consider yourself!" she continued; "the expression of your features cannot deceive! You will one day be a man, a valiant and noble man! Begin from this moment to prove the truth of my prophecy. I by no means ask your mother to diminish or delay your punishment! No, I rather expect from you that you will patiently suffer it, because I think you capable of so noble a resolution!"

Bertrand, who until now had gazed speechless and motionless upon the floor, at these words laid down his stick, and walked with a firm tread towards the door.

"Where are you going?" cried the nun, hastening after him, and seizing his hand.

"To my prison, Madam! But I do not wish any one to take me there," replied Bertrand, repressing his tears, "I know the way."

"If that then is your resolution, I will beg your mother to forgive you!" said the nun, kissing the child's forehead: "You are a fine, noble-hearted boy!"

"Yes, indeed, I forgive you with all my heart!" cried Madame du Guesclin, folding her arms around her son, and pressing him tenderly to her bosom.

"Ah!" she continued, "if my Bertrand only would will it, I might be the happiest of all mothers!"

"You shall be so from this very moment! I give you my word!" replied Bertrand, with so gentle and submissive an air and tone, that his enraptured mother again strained him to her heart.

"I can only repeat my words," cried the nun, as if inspired: "Your son will henceforth be an honor to you, and all will congratulate you that you are his mother!"


"I believe it now!" said Madame du Guesclin; "who does not willingly believe what is so deeply to be desired? But I beseech you, my good sister, to repeat your visit, and aid my son in his good resolutions! Since the moment of your entrance he is entirely changed! His whole being seems transformed!"

"Fruits which *never* ripen are good for nothing," observed Bertrand, whom the nun's prophecy had deeply touched, "but those which ripen *late*, will be good!"

A few days later, the lord of the castle returned from his journey. The first object which engaged his attention as he took his seat at table amid his family, was Bertrand, — but he scarcely recognized him. His clothes were clean and neat, his face carefully washed, and his hair, which had formerly, by its wild disorder, caused his head to seem unnaturally large, now fell in graceful curls around his neck and brow.

His behavior, too, was no less changed. He ate quietly and modestly, answered politely when he was spoken to, and when he had occasion to ask a service from one of the servants, he did so in the gentlest manner.

The father's wonder was still more increased, when, upon asking several questions of Bertrand, he received the most intelligent



and respectful answers. After dinner the little Du Guesclin played with his brother and sister so kindly and peacefully, that not the least contention arose; indeed so mild was he towards them, that once when he was quite in the right, he nevertheless yielded; in short, his design seemed to be to win all hearts through the excellence of his behavior.

The happy father gave his son, on the very next day, a beautiful little horse, and soon after permitted him to take riding lessons. This exercise pleased the courageous boy better than all his studies, and in a short time he displayed so much skill in all knightly accomplishments, that, even in a tender age, he won many a prize at tourneys, and in all competitions of strength, dexterity, and valor. As he grew older, his fame ever extended wider and wider, as one of the noblest and bravest young men of his day.

Thus did the rude and uncontrollable boy become, through the beautiful trust and the quiet influence of that quick-sighted and

judicious nun, a noble and knightly hero, who perfectly fulfilled her incredible prophecy.

In later days he ever thought of her with reverential gratitude, and never forgot the hour, which had decided the course of his whole future life, when all the better faculties of his soul had been aroused into action, as if by some magic power.

As a reward for his services, Charles the Fifth, King of France, under whose banner Bertrand du Guesclin had won the most brilliant victories, made him Constable of France; in other words, the commander of all the forces belonging to the kingdom, the highest military honor of that age. But Bertrand was as highly distinguished for his noble soul, as for his brilliant and successful valor, and won, not only the admiration, but the veneration, esteem, and love of his compatriots, — even of his enemies.

When he fell, a victim to his heroic courage, at the siege of the castle of Randon, his victorious rival, the commandant of the for-

tress, appeared among the first of those who followed the corpse of the noble and universally lamented warrior to the tomb.

Thus does the name of Du Guesclin shine as one of the first and most glorious in French history. Poets and historians have immortalized his deeds, and also does his image stand before you, my youthful reader, as an example worthy of imitation; for often a noble and firm resolution is all that is required to fulfil the hopes of those who love us, — and each victory must begin with an acknowledgment of the old faults, which have led so far astray, and a determination to conquer one's self, and steadily and cheerfully to walk in the path of uprightness and self-control.

May the Almighty bless every struggle towards so lofty an aim, and guide the generous combatant to a final and entire victory!

THE LILAC AND THE ELDER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

AGNES FRANZ.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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THE LILAC AND THE ELDER.

"AM I not to have a new hat, and a new veil too, Mamma?" cried Mignon, gayly.

"Certainly, my daughter, — as soon as you have made your first soup!"

"O, O, Mamma, the first soup?" laughed Mignon.

"La-la, li, la-la! You must first take ——"

"Stop, stop, Mignon! First tell me what kind of soup you will make."

"O, brown veal soup, with vegetables, Mamma! What else?"

"Patience! The child talks as if there were no other kind of soup in the whole world!" laughed the father, who had been listening to the previous conversation.

"Well, then, you must first take one or

two pounds of veal, cut it in pieces, and let it ——”

With these words, addressed to no one in particular, Mignon skipped out of the door into the garden, to gather a bunch of flowers. But she continued to mutter to herself, as if studying the important receipt for the soup in the cookery book: “And then baste it,—yes, baste it,—with butter, until it is of a fine brown,—fine brown,—and then cut thyme, parsley, and — and — O now what else was there?”

Mignon stood still, quite provoked, and strove in vain to remember the continuation of her soup receipt. “Ah!” she cried at last, “I can make nothing out of that: let me see if I remember the white almond soup any better!”

But the white almond soup had equally escaped her memory; and after letting her thoughts wander confusedly over soups, roast meats, cakes, and jellies, she cried out pettishly: “What nonsense I am chattering!

The cuckoo may eat them all! But softly! here are the flowers! Away with the ugly cookery receipts!"

Mignon then began to use her little knife, and select among the beautiful flowers with which the garden was filled. She soon had arranged a tasteful bouquet, and showed herself much better acquainted with the forms and colors of the lovely blossoms, than with her soups. "Ah!" she said, "why should one torment one's self with such pitiful stuff! Mamma is rich and keeps a cook, and I too shall be able to keep a cook. But it is nevertheless true that Mamma can make an excellent soup! Well! knowledge comes with time! I shall learn, perhaps, one day!"

Thus did Mignon console herself, and soon yielding to the influence of a new idea, she climbed the garden fence, and broke off the rich, perfumed bunches from a lilac-bush. It was truly charming to see how this lovely shrub was covered all over with purple blossoms. Their fragrance filled the air, and their

graceful branches waved charmingly in the fresh morning breeze. Mignon was delighted.

While she was still selecting the finest branches, she observed on the other side of the fence a little maiden busily employed in gathering the pale, white blossoms of a common elder-bush, whose strong and disagreeable perfume offended Mignon's delicate nerves.

"For heaven's sake, Rose!" cried Mignon, "do let that horrible bush alone! How can you take any pleasure in such hateful flowers! Come, take these lovely lilac blossoms, and chat a little with me, for time begins to hang heavy on my hands."

Rose cast a modest glance upon the richly dressed and delicate looking girl, and said: "Ah! my dear young lady, you are so kind; but I must gather these flowers, because my grandmother wants them to make tea of. I assure you they make a very wholesome tea. Will you not accept a few of them from me?"

"No indeed, Rose!" said Mignon, draw-

ing back, "my hands would smell of them the whole day."

"Very well, Miss," replied the little neighbor, whose friendly offer had received so abrupt a repulse, a noble pride tinging her cheeks with a lively red; "I have just as little fancy for your blossoms, which have a pleasant perfume, but are of no use."

Mignon gazed in astonishment upon the young girl, and descending from her wooden throne walked sadly towards her home, for she had wounded the poor child's pride.

A few weeks passed by. Mignon's father went upon a journey, and mother and daughter lived almost alone in the pretty country-house. Mignon had long before received the hat and veil from her kind father, and he had neglected to inquire whether she had yet learned how to make the promised soup. The light-hearted maiden had found it entirely convenient to forget all about the cookery book and its receipts, the more so as she now began

to take much pleasure in the society of the neighboring families.

But one evening, when it was already quite late, Mignon's mother complained of a violent pain, and great soreness in her throat. Her malady momentarily increased, until it became so alarming that a messenger was despatched in great haste for the physician, who unfortunately lived at a considerable distance, in a neighboring town.

All the house was in a state of alarm and commotion, and lights were moving hurriedly to and fro, as the servants sought in vain some means of alleviation.

"Ah! if we only had a little elder tea in the house!" cried an old servant, "we might help our dear lady, perhaps quite cure her! But we have not a single flower!"

Mignon, who until now had remained seated at the foot of her mother's bed, weeping bitterly, suddenly raised her head and asked: "What! Elder tea? Will that be of any use?"

"Certainly," replied the servant.

"Well, then, go quickly to our old neighbor's. Her grandchild, Rose, has gathered quite a supply of such flowers. Only make haste! Tell her I beg she will have the kindness to send me some."

She would have said more, but the old woman had already departed, and soon after returned with Rose herself, who brought a quantity of the flowers she had gathered in a handkerchief.

Mignon pressed the good child's hand friendly: she had not seen her since the day of the little contest concerning the relative merits of their blossoms. The tea was soon made, the sick lady drank some of it, and with the remainder her throat was bathed.

O joy! In a short time she felt much better, and fell into a sweet and health-restoring slumber.

"Noble girl, how can I reward you?" said Mignon, deeply moved, "of what do you stand in need?"

"Of nothing, my dear young lady," replied Rose, modestly; "I have everything I want, and what I have done is no more than the duty of every neighbor. But may I not now ask you to accept some of my flowers?" she added, with a faint smile, which played archly around her pretty mouth.

Mignon reddened, but then embraced the kind little maiden, and said: "Dear Rose, will you not in future be my playfellow? I can offer you nothing, as I now see and understand! But only wear this ring as a remembrance of your friend!"

Rose was quite overwhelmed with this mark of kind feeling, and drooping her eyes, whispered: "Thanks, dear Mignon, thanks from my heart! And now farewell; I will always remain your most devoted servant!"

"No, no, my friend! my dear friend!" cried Mignon, as she pressed the modest maiden to her breast, "will you not?"

"How willingly!" said Rose, and a tear fell from her clear and innocent eyes, which

now rested upon the lovely face of the grateful Mignon.

The two became indeed the most united and dear friends; and Mignon learned from Rose, ever more and more closely to bind the beautiful with the useful.

THE END.

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